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DANIEL WEBSTER.

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THE LIFE OF DANIEL WEBSTER
BY J. C. CALVERT, V. 1, 1853, 1854

Published by J. C. Calvert

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LIFE AND MEMORIALS OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

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LIFE AND MEMORIALS

OF

DANIEL WEBSTER.

[ed. by
S. P. Lyman]

FROM THE NEW-YORK DAILY TIMES.

VOLUME I.

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D. APPLETON & COMPANY, 200 BROADWAY.

1853.



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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Personal Memorials which compose so large a portion of these volumes, are from the pen of Gen. S. P. Lyman, whose intimate and confidential relations with Mr. Webster afford a sufficient guarantee for their authenticity. They are believed by the publishers to embrace a more copious collection of original and interesting memoranda, concerning the life and character of the great Statesman whose recent death has created so deep a sense of bereavement throughout the country, than has hitherto been given to the world. Some of these papers appeared some years since in the Commercial Advertiser and the Courier & Enquirer ; and were revised and greatly extended for the Daily Times, from which they are now reprinted under the author's supervision. The biographical sketch is from the Times, in which it

appeared on the day after Mr. Webster's decease : the miscellaneous anecdotes in the sequel, all of which are of a striking character, and well worthy of preservation, are credited to their various sources.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 1852.

MEMORIALS OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

DANIEL WEBSTER, SECRETARY OF STATE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, died on Sunday morning, October 24th, at 3 o'clock, surrounded by his family and friends, at his home in Marshfield. He had repaired thither, from the labors and cares of his official position at Washington, in consequence of failing health some weeks before; but it was not until ten days before his decease, that his medical attendants pronounced his recovery hopeless. His last hours comported well with the calm dignity and the imposing grandeur of his character and his life. The summons of Death was heard with the same serenity, and obeyed with the same prompt submission, with which every call of Duty during his life had been answered and met. Thus has closed the most illustrious career which has yet graced the civil history of this Republic. It closed as was fitting, away from the anxieties and responsibilities of official place, in the midst of the sanctities and affections of Home. That great light, from which radiance and warmth, and all strengthening influences, have so long been shed upon his country, has disap-

peared, not by any sudden eclipse of its meridian glory, but by the natural decline from its lofty course, in the full but mellowed radiance of its advanced hours. For the instruction and guidance which we have been accustomed to find in his presence and his public acts, the country must now recur to the records of history, and to those matchless productions of his genius which he has bequeathed to the use and the care of the coming generations.

A great English dramatist, in closing a preface to the collected works of two of his cotemporaries, one of whom was his intimate friend, pronounces at once a eulogy upon their character, and an interdict upon all who should attempt to hold it up to the admiration of the world, by declaring that "he must be a bold man that *dares* undertake to write their lives." The exigencies of journalism leave little room to consult the proprieties which would deter even so consummate a genius as Shirley from writing the biographies of Beaumont and Fletcher. Fortunately, however, its aims are not so lofty as to render failure in the attempt to reach them, an offence beyond the scope of charitable consideration. And although few men of modern times take higher rank than Daniel Webster among those "worthy personages that deserve better than dispersed report or barren eulogies,"—and although he who shall give to the world an adequate and satisfactory account of that long and laborious life, which has just come to a close, will render a service to the country and the world, which even the high praise of Biography, by Lord Bacon, could not extol too much,—the ambi-

tion of the Journalist is simply to be useful in a smaller way, and to supply such general knowledge of the great deceased, as may awaken kindly recollections of what he has done, and thus meet the craving which bereavement always creates in the human heart. We shall have accomplished, therefore, all we can hope to do, in the few hours that remain for such a task, if, in sketching the life and public career of Mr. Webster, we shall be found to have brought afresh to memory, and to have commended anew to grateful study, events reflecting honor upon the country,—acts evincing profound and intelligent patriotism, and sentiments which will find an echo in every heart, duly alive to the interests of the race, and studious of the means by which its civil well-being can be best secured.

Daniel Webster was born in the town of Salisbury, New Hampshire, on the 18th of January, 1782. His age, at the period of his death, was accordingly seventy years, nine months, and six days.

The ancestral line of the Webster family extended back, in authentic records, to the early part of the seventeenth century. Thomas Webster, born in 1632, was the great-great-grandfather of Daniel. He emigrated to this country from Norfolk, England, in the year 1656, and settled at Hampton, in New Hampshire, where, soon after his arrival, he was united in marriage to Sarah Brewer, by whom he had five sons and three daughters. Ebenezer, his second son, was born in 1667, and was married to Hannah Judkins in July, 1709. Of his sons, only one had issue. This was Ebenezer, grandfather of Daniel

who was married to Susannah Batchelder in 1738, and had eight children, of whom the oldest was Ebenezer, the father of the great statesman.

Ebenezer Webster was born in Kingston, New Hampshire, on the 22d of April, 1739. The settlement was then new, and Ebenezer's father was a diligent and persevering farmer. The son, an active youth, was early chosen as one of the famous "Rangers" of Major Robert Rogers, and served with that distinguished officer, under Lord Amherst, in the French war of 1763. The Rangers were kept in the pay of the Crown during the continuance of the war. Mr. Webster was one of the party which, under the command of Major Rogers, made an expedition to Crown Point for the purpose of chastising the Indians and destroying their villages—an act which was deemed essential to the preservation of the whites. The Rangers were always on active duty, and proved most efficient allies. The history of their trials and their triumphs has never been fully told. At the conclusion of the peace, Mr. Webster, taking advantage of the moment of quiet which was afforded him, commenced a settlement, in company with several others, in a border-town on a branch of the Merrimack River. The place was first known as Bakerstown, but was afterward called Salisbury—a name that will endure as long as the history of its greatest son shall be remembered and cherished among the proudest ornaments of the country. Mr. Webster had just commenced the necessary preparations for a comfortable rural residence, when the Revolutionary struggle began. His former reputation as one of the body of

Rangers served to direct the eyes of his neighbors toward him, and his services were soon in active request as the leader in the constitution of their military bands. It is needless to say that the veteran Ranger entered, heart and soul, into that long and dubious contest. Foremost among the brave defenders of the nation, and skilful, brave and experienced, the weight of Mr. Webster's talents was speedily manifested in the consistent ardor with which the battle was maintained. Mr. Webster commanded a volunteer company of his friends and neighbors, under General Stark, in the fight at Bennington, and, during the engagement, was seen in the thickest of the fray. It had been given out by Stark, some time previous to the battle, that it was his intention to march to Stillwater, and a detachment of the British, one thousand strong, was consequently sent to intercept him. The forces of the enemy having been thus divided and weakened, the American general was enabled to cope with them in detail. Col. Warner was stationed in the rear of the American army, with a reserved corps, while Captain Webster was ordered to advance with his company of one hundred men, in search of two hundred more, who were out upon a scout. The companies once united, Captain Webster was to assume the command of the whole, and fall upon the enemy on the rear, but on no account to fire, until the action had commenced on the other side. It was on this memorable occasion that General Stark uttered the celebrated words: "Fellow-soldiers! there is the enemy: if we don't take them, Molly Stark will be a widow to-night!" Captain

Webster having fulfilled the duty assigned him in collecting together the three hundred men, awaited his share in the honors of the day. When allowed to make his charge upon the enemy, with pieces loaded, and with firm and equal step, his men advanced upon the opposing breastworks. Captain Webster was the first to leap the defences, but the reinforcements were not sufficient to render the attack successful, and his command was driven back. Meantime, the British were strengthened by the arrival of one thousand fresh troops upon the field, and a new disposition of the battle became necessary. General Stark placed Captain Webster and Captain Gregg on the left wing of the American force, Colonel Nichols on the right, and placed the army in a strong position. The result of that struggle is a matter of history, and a large proportion of its fame is due to the efforts of Ebenezer Webster. At the battle of White Plains, Mr. Webster was also present, and performed effective service. At the end of the war, he again retired to private life, and sought to end his days peacefully and with honor, as an humble cultivator of the soil. This, however, was denied him. The people whom he had served had stronger claims upon him. He was, for several years, elected a Representative from Salisbury to the Legislature of New Hampshire, and in the years 1785-6-8 and '90 filled the office of State Senator. In 1785 he was appointed Colonel of the Militia. In 1791 he was chosen as Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, for the county of Hillsborough, which office he held until 1805. On the 22d of April of the follow-

ing year (1806), Col. Webster died upon his farm, at the age of 67. His wife, Abigail, survived him ten years, and died on the 14th of April, 1816, aged 76 years.

Col. Webster was twice married. His second wife, Abigail Eastman, the mother of Daniel and Ezekiel, was a lady of Welsh descent, and a resident of Salisbury at the time of her marriage.

Daniel Webster was born under the influence of true New England institutions. A harsh and rugged country, cold blasts and meagre natural advantages, formed no pleasant introductions to the world. The hills and forests of the Granite State offered few inducements, years ago, for the development of intellectual versatility and strength. It was the aim of her people to impart to their children the soundest principles of morality and common sense. Few indulgences were allowed them, and the sacredness of parental control was strictly guarded. In the midst of such a public sentiment was Daniel Webster reared. He enjoyed what is termed a good New England education, receiving the fullest advantages of the school system of that day—not, as now, brought home to every door, but occasional and migratory in its nature.

While still young, Daniel was daily sent two miles and a half to school, in the middle of winter, and on foot. He walked the entire distance there and back. If the school chanced to remove still further from his father's house, board was engaged in some convenient family for the youthful student, and his acquisitions of knowledge were pursued without interruption. An

ardent desire for learning was early manifest in the mind of Daniel Webster. Difficulties were presented, with which he was compelled to struggle; hindrances stood in the way, which he was obliged to overcome. But every obstacle was surmounted, and the scholar came forth a man. His father was deeply impressed with the necessity of education, and spared no pains to give Daniel a thorough insight into the mysteries of knowledge. Among the few volumes contained in the circulating library of that day, the young Daniel found a special fascination in a copy of the "Spectator"—particularly in the criticisms upon "Chevy Chase." Before he was fourteen years old, he could repeat the whole of the "Essay on Man." The muse possessed great attractions for his fancy, and devotional hymns were frequently added to the list of his juvenile accomplishments. Among the pieces committed to memory, as a pastime merely, was the entire volume of that ancient collection of church melodies known as "Watts's Psalms and Hymns."

In his fourteenth year, Daniel was placed in Phillips' Academy at Exeter, N. H., at that time under the care of Dr. Benjamin Abbot. This event, his first separation from home and friends, took place on the 25th April, 1796. Daniel was now one among ninety boys, all of whom were perfect strangers. Reconciling himself, however, to the necessities of the case, Daniel soon became naturalized among his new associates, and made rapid progress in the customary routine of academical studies. Public declamation, curiously enough, was his aversion, and the thought of it a bugbear. The future orator withdrew from

observation, and sought to conceal himself behind his fellows. Remaining but a few months at the academy, Daniel, in February, 1797, was placed under the tuition of Rev. Samuel Woods, at Boscawen. The prospect of a collegiate education was at this time first opened to him by his father. Incited by the indications of this preferment, colleges being then exclusive, and not in every case attainable, the young man profited by the opportunities that were offered him. With Mr. Woods he read Virgil and Cicero, and became a fair Latin scholar. His favorite classic at this time was Cicero, and the strength of early impressions was never abated—the immortal Orator was always the favorite study of the American Sage.

In the summer of 1797, Daniel entered Dartmouth College as a Freshman. The regular duties of a student were performed by him with faithfulness and energy. He lost no time in idle dissipations, became noted for a constant avidity for reading, and devoted much attention to the acquisition of a knowledge of English literature. Among his college pastimes he superintended the publication of a small weekly newspaper, to which he contributed various selections, and occasionally an original essay. These early efforts in composition are probably the first of his writings that were ever published. Graduating with the approbation of his fellows, and in receipt of the honorable testimonials of merit, though not displaying any remarkable powers which would seem to indicate his future greatness, Daniel returned home, determined to adopt the profession of the law for a livelihood.

A course of legal reading was begun under the eye of Mr. Thompson, a gentleman well known to the family of Mr. Webster, and afterward United States Senator. Daniel's studies were not, however, suffered to be prolonged without interruption. Anxious that his brother Ezekiel should possess advantages for education similar to those enjoyed by himself, Daniel interceded with his father with such success that the brother, in 1801, was sent to college. To meet the additional expenses which this circumstance involved, Daniel temporarily forsook the law and commenced teaching school, as much to advance his brother as to cover the necessary expenditures in the prosecution of his own profession. The pedagogue was first made manifest in the town of Fryeburg, in Maine, where Daniel taught the town Academy, at the meagre stipend of \$350. Of this amount, he contrived to save the whole, having obtained the post of Assistant to the Register of Deeds of the County, by which he met the ordinary outlays of his position. In Fryeburg, Mr. Webster found another circulating library, in which was contained a set of Blackstone's Commentaries, the legal food of the young student during his stay in that place.

In September, 1802, Daniel returned to Salisbury, and resumed the study of the law with Mr. Thompson. When not so engaged, his time was occupied with the Latin Classics. He read with avidity the tomes of Sallust, Cæsar and Horace. Some odes of the latter were translated by him and published. The sports of angling, gunning and horsemanship constituted his pastimes. The meditative pursuit of old

Izaak was always a favorite amusement of the great statesman. With fishing-rod and line he would wait for hours beside some tranquil stream, watching the play of the suspicious tribe, and moralizing, like his piscatorian model, upon the ways and doings of fishes and of men. Indeed, it is sportively said by his friends, that, as the future orator one day drew in a large and most tempting trout, he uttered the words which he afterwards employed on the Bunker-Hill Address: "Venerable men! you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives that you might behold this joyous day." The tale is probably a jest; but the words are immortal. In this way, Mr. Webster was ever in the habit of planning speeches and pursuing some other avocation at one and the same moment.

In July, 1804, Daniel removed to Boston, where his course of law-reading went forward under the eye of Hon. Christopher Gore, afterward Governor of Massachusetts. The most ample opportunities were here enjoyed for a complete legal education, and Daniel so far improved them that in the following year (March, 1805), he was admitted to practise in the Suffolk Court of Common Pleas. According to the custom of those days, the pupil was accompanied into Court by his patron. To the kind exertions of Governor Gore in his behalf, on this occasion, Mr. Webster acknowledged his great indebtedness. The introduction insured him respect and attention, and he was not long in stepping into a lucrative professional business. It is worthy of remark, as an evi-

dence of the superior discernment of his legal guardian, that, in the introductory address, Governor Gore took the pains to utter a prophecy of the future celebrity of the young aspirant. Mr. Webster began practice in the village of Boscawen, whence he removed to Portsmouth, N. H., in 1807.

About this time an event occurred which was nearly a crisis in the young man's history. The clerkship of the County Court of Common Pleas in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, became vacant, and Judge Webster being at the time upon the bench, his colleagues tendered the vacant post to Daniel, as a mark of respect to his father. Daniel was not at all in favor of the proposition. His friend, Governor Gore, strongly discouraged his acceptance of the office. "Once a clerk, always a clerk," was the argument of that gentleman. Daniel, too, saw reasons why he should not accept. But he knew his father's heart was bent upon it, and, fearing to refuse, he started homeward. In conversation with his father, he finally expressed his determination to decline. Judge Webster was for a moment incensed. Daniel replied that "he meant to use his tongue in the courts, not the pen; to be an actor, not the register of other men's actions." His father answered him with pride, "His mother," he observed, "had always said that Daniel would come to something or nothing, she was not sure which; he thought the doubt was about to be settled." So the clerkship went its ways, and Daniel reconciled to his father, and satisfied with his own course, went back to his practice. Judge Webster lived but a year afterward, but his life was long

enough to enable him to hear his son's first argument, and to be gratified at the fulfilment of the promising predictions that had been circulated regarding him. He died in April, 1806.

In May, 1807, Daniel, whom we shall now designate by the more dignified appellation of Mr. Webster, was admitted to practice as attorney and counsellor of the Supreme Court of New Hampshire, and in September of the same year relinquished his office to his brother Ezekiel, who had then obtained admission to the Bar. Daniel then removed to Portsmouth. It may here be proper to say, that Mr. Webster always espoused with warmth the cause of Ezekiel, his only brother. A man of strong, native powers, though slow to action, Ezekiel only lacked opportunity and a longer life to have become a distinguished personage. He died in the prime of life, while arguing a cause in Concord, New Hampshire, and was lamented by a large class of friends and mourning relatives.

Daniel Webster was married in June, 1808, to Grace Fletcher, daughter of Rev. Mr. Fletcher, of Hopkinton, New Hampshire. They had four children—Grace, Fletcher, Julia, and Edward—of whom only Fletcher now survives. Grace died early; Edward was killed in the Mexican War; Julia married one of the Appletons, of Boston, and died a few years since.

Mr. Webster resided in Portsmouth for a period of nine years. The Bar of that time presented a roll of brilliant names. Samuel Dexter and Joseph Story, of Massachusetts, William K. Atkinson, Attorney-

General of New Hampshire, Judge Jeremiah Smith, Jeremiah Mason, and men of like calibre, were the leading practitioners of the law. With them was sustained a pleasant and profitable intercourse, and the friendship which they extended to Mr. Webster was no small assistance to the efforts of the new aspirant for legal honors. Mr. Webster's practice here was chiefly circuit. He followed the Superior Court into many of the Counties of the State, and was retained in most of the important causes upon the docket. Office he never held in New Hampshire, and his private professional practice was not remarkably lucrative. It has been remarked, as a circumstance somewhat singular, that in very few cases was Mr. Webster employed as junior counsel. Scarcely a dozen instances of this kind occurred during his long career. Men had occasion for his services as their leading counsel, and reposed in him the utmost confidence—a reliance which was never misplaced or regretted, and to which many will now turn with a grateful recollection of the value of his aid.

Soon after the Declaration of War against England, Mr. Webster was called to enter the arena of public life. Though but thirty years of age, an early period to take part in the Councils of a Nation—the native strength of Mr. Webster's character had already pointed him out as the man that was needed for the times; and the undeveloped Statesman made his first step in that long career of public life which has identified his name, as Representative, Senator, Diplomatist, and Cabinet Minister, with the history of the United States.

MR. WEBSTER IN CONGRESS.

The political contest which resulted in the election of Mr. Webster to the House of Representatives, was long and spirited. A vehement opposition was started against the party which he represented, and although his ultimate triumph was gratifying in the extreme, the struggle was severe. Mr. Webster finally received a very handsome majority over his opponent, and took his seat at the Extra Session of the Thirteenth Congress, in May, 1813. The time at which he entered Congress was one of great excitement. The question of the prosecution of the War was warmly agitated, and raised divisions of party opinion, that threatened serious difficulties. The wisdom of retorting by severe retaliatory measures, against the arbitrary acts of Great Britain, respecting American shipping, was doubted by many members of that Congress. The conviction of the necessity of the conflict was not general throughout the country. Men objected that the War had been begun by a faction, that it was non-essential in principle, and that it needed not to be prosecuted with any extraordinary degree of ardor. Into the midst of this caldron of differing opinions, Mr. Webster was thrown by his constituents. He was equal to the emergency in which he found himself plunged. That Congress comprised men of surpassing talent. Of the House, Henry Clay was Speaker. Among the members were Calhoun, Forsyth, Grundy, Gaston, Pickering. Intellect and learning shed a lustre over

the Lower House, which it has rarely witnessed since. Mr. Webster made his appearance punctually at the commencement of the Session, and was immediately placed by Mr. Clay upon the Committee of Foreign Affairs, a position of honor and responsibility.

Mr. Webster delivered his maiden speech in the House on Thursday, 10th June, 1813. It took Congress by surprise. A young man, appearing for the first time in public life, and previously unknown in political circles; had made a sudden and indelible impression upon older and more experienced men. The result has proved that the early promise was not fallacious. Intellect sharpened and strengthened by continual exercise, especially in courts of law, and under the excitement of vehement opposition, is pretty sure to receive a rapid and healthy development. Mr. Webster founded his speech upon certain resolutions which he introduced in relation to the Berlin and Milan Decrees, requesting the President "to inform the House when, by whom, and in what manner, the first intelligence was given to this Government of the decree of the Government of France, bearing date the 28th of April, 1811, and purporting to be a definitive repeal of the Decrees of Berlin and Milan." The resolutions were supported by Mr. Webster, in a speech of masterly power and vigor, producing facts and arguments, which could do no less than rivet the attention of the House. The object of Mr. Webster was merely to obtain information, which was freely communicated by President Madison. The action of Napoleon in regard to the maritime questions of the day was productive of such

measure of retaliation from England, that great danger was experienced by the neutral powers which had vessels upon the ocean. Great Britain then insisting upon her right of search in vessels belonging to the United States, the pent-up passions found vent, and the mother country and her daughter were again embroiled in war. Mr. Webster entered Congress, not at the commencement of this second struggle, but in the heat of its progress. War was raging when he took his seat. The minutiae of the preparations for its continuance, were allotted to him as one of the National Council. Although opposed to the policy which had been adopted, he offered no very serious opposition to the prosecution of the war, and contented himself with seeking to guide the strong current into channels which appeared safest and most expedient. He had always believed that the most efficient method of crippling the power of England, was to attack her upon the sea, and hence, at an early period, he advocated the improvement of the Navy. Before the commencement of the War, or his entrance into Congress, he had written several powerful arguments favoring an increase of our naval force, and one of his earliest speeches in the House was intended to accomplish the same purpose. Other topics of national interest and importance also occupied his attention while he continued a member of the House. On the repeal of the Embargo, and on an appeal from the Chair on a motion for the previous question, he spoke strongly and with effect. His standing as an orator was speedily attained. It never degenerated into a secondary quality, and the part assumed by him in

his earliest public efforts was such as few men so young have sustained. Of the speeches of Mr. Webster on the Embargo and on the appeal, Mr. Everett holds the following language: "His speeches on these questions raised him to the front rank of debaters. He manifested upon his entrance into public life, that variety of knowledge, familiarity with the history and traditions of the Government, and self-possession on the floor, which in most cases are acquired by time and long experience. They gained for him the reputation indicated by the well-known remark of Mr. Lowndes, that 'the North had not his equal, nor the South his superior.'"

Mr. Webster was re-elected to the House of Representatives in August, 1814. His constituents, pleased that New Hampshire could send so creditable a representative, and justly proud of the honorable position attained in so brief a period by Mr. Webster, again gave him the preference, and he received, for the second time, a handsome majority. When he again entered upon the discharge of his public duties, Mr. Webster found himself in a new position. The Peace was declared in December, 1814, and Congress had time to give its attention to the internal affairs of the country. The debates no longer turned upon the budget of War. The commercial class and the mass of the people were now to receive attention, and their wants were to be canvassed and supplied. Government found it convenient to propose the establishment of a National Bank, and a bill for that purpose was introduced into the House, on the recommendation of Mr. Dallas, then Secretary of the Treasury. The

elicited a splendid display of forensic ability from arose. It required the reservation of a Bank capital of fifty millions of dollars; of which only five millions were to be in specie, and the remainder in the depreciated Government securities; with an obligation to lend thirty millions for the use of the Treasury. With these provisions, the bill had passed the Senate, and was sent to the House. It was warmly discussed. Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Webster were among its opponents. Mr. Webster deemed the project useless and pernicious. He denounced it as a mere paper-money contrivance, which was calculated to injure the People, to increase the financial embarrassments of the Government, and to bring discredit upon the Country. The bill, as originally reported, was finally negatived. A reconsideration was then moved, and the bill was amended in several important particulars. A specie-paying Bank was planned, and received the support of Mr. Webster and those who had opposed so strenuously the original draft. In its improved shape the bill passed, and was sent to the President for approval, but Mr. Madison returned it to the House with his objections, and the subject went over for that session.

The adjournment of Congress left Mr. Webster at liberty to resume his professional occupations, and enabled him to pay that degree of attention to his personal affairs of which they had stood in need during his long absence from home. In the month of January, 1814, he had sustained a heavy loss in the destruction of his house at Portsmouth by the great fire which visited that place. Not remarkably rich in the goods of this world at that period, Mr. Webster's finances

bill contained provisions to which great opposition suffered a serious blow by this disaster, and he began to agitate the question of removing his family either to Albany or Boston. This removal was effected in August, 1816. Mr. Webster was well known in Boston as a citizen and a professional man. He was certain of a warm welcome among old friends, and saw many reasons why he should return to the field in which he first stepped forward. His practice in the Courts of New Hampshire was never resumed, excepting in the celebrated case of Dartmouth College, tried in September, 1817. This cause involved Constitutional questions, and engaged the attention of Mr. Webster for a considerable period. The Legislature of New Hampshire had passed certain acts purporting to enlarge and improve the Corporation of the College and to amend its Charter. The trial was to test the question whether such acts could be binding upon the Corporation, without its consent. Mr. Webster espousing the cause of the Corporation, argued with his usual ability upon the unconstitutionality of the action of the Legislature. Upon an adverse opinion of the New Hampshire Court being rendered, a writ of error was sued out by the Corporation, and the cause was removed to the Supreme Court of the United States. The argument took place, before all the Judges, in March 1818; Mr. Webster and Mr. Hopkinson appearing for the plaintiffs in error, and Mr. Holmes and the Attorney-General of New Hampshire in opposition. The question involved in the case was new to American Jurisprudence, and

the opposing counsel. The argument of Mr. Webster served to place the matter in its true light, and Judge Story at last coincided with his colleagues in declaring the acts of the Legislature invalid, and reversing the decision of the Superior Court of New-Hampshire.

When Mr. Webster removed to Boston, he had one session to serve in Congress as Representative from New-Hampshire. The proceedings of that session were unimportant. At its close, he retired to his practice in Boston, where for two years he was permitted to repose, in the exercise of the duties of private life. He was not, however, allowed any longer respite. He was soon urged by friends and political admirers to become a candidate for Congress for the third time; but he steadfastly declined the offer. An offer of election to the Senate of the United States was tendered him by his friends in the Legislature; but this was also declined. Devoted to his profession, he had no wish to draw himself from it. Earning a competency by his legal attainments, he desired no honors other than those which attached to a good citizen and an honest man. The community insisted more strongly upon pressing him again into the public service. He served for a short time in the Legislature, was chosen one of the Presidential Electors of Massachusetts in the canvass which resulted in the re-election of Mr. Monroe, and was a delegate to the Convention called to revise the Constitution of the Commonwealth in 1821. In that Convention, Mr. Webster took a prominent part,—constitutional argument having become his forte. His

principal arguments were devoted to the subjects of oaths of office, the division of the State into Senatorial Districts, and the appointment of Judicial officers by the Executive.

In the Fall of 1822, after the most pressing solicitation, Mr. Webster yielded his consent to run again for Congress. A committee, consisting of Col. Thomas H. Perkins, Wm. Sturgis, Wm. Sullivan, John T. Apthorp, and Daniel Messenger, called upon him to apprise him of his nomination. He did not now decline. He was elected by one thousand majority over his competitor, Jesse Putnam, and again took his seat in the House, not as a Member from a rural district in New-Hampshire,—but a Representative from the City of Boston. Henry Clay was again Speaker. Familiar faces greeted the vision of the Massachusetts Representative, and earnest discussions presently gave active employment to Mr. Webster's busy mind.

Early in the session, the subject of the Revolution in Greece came before the House. Mr. Webster on the 8th of December, 1823, presented the following resolution: "That provision ought to be made by law, for defraying the expense incident to the appointment of an Agent or Commissioner to Greece, whenever the President shall deem it expedient to make such appointment."

In his famous speech in support of this resolution, Mr. Webster showed himself a profound and discriminating judge of the laws that govern the relations of nations and communities. In sympathy for the oppressed and struggling Greeks, he was not surpassed

by any of the men of his time. He evinced a ready appreciation of the evils with which they struggled, and uttered a trumpet-toned and indignant remonstrance against the tyranny which sought their degradation. The "Greek speech" will be remembered as long as American Oratory has a place among the records of History.

It is interesting to notice that the principles which were avowed on this occasion, were subsequently re-affirmed by Mr. Webster in language still more striking, applied to the affairs of Hungary. On the occasion of the Congressional Banquet to Kosuth in January last, Mr. Webster declared that "in the sentiments avowed by him in the years 1823 and 1824, in the cause of Greece, *there was that which he could never part from without departing from himself.*" Those sentiments were most fearlessly put forth. On the 19th January, 1823, Mr. Webster made a long and eloquent argument, covering the whole question. Reviewing the circumstances which accompanied the struggles of the Greeks, and passing some severe strictures upon the policy observed by the states of Europe towards that unhappy country, Mr. Webster proceeded to a statement of the effects and consequences of the actions of European potentates in regard to free governments and the spread of republican institutions. The limits of this sketch permit no detailed analysis of the line of argument laid down by Mr. Webster, in this celebrated speech, nor is it necessary. The leading idea was the defence of free institutions against absolutism; an argument in favor of constitutional rights against

the encroachments of despotism. In regarding the position proper to be assumed by this country, in reference to the Greek struggle, Mr. Webster gave utterance to one of the finest passages which the language has produced. He sought to discourage any violent and belligerent measures, and fell back upon the power of public opinion. In arguing this point, he said :

“ Sir, this reasoning mistakes the age. The time has been, indeed, when fleets, and armies, and subsidies were the principal reliances, even in the best cause. But, happily for mankind, there has arrived a great change in this respect. Moral causes come into consideration in proportion as the progress of knowledge is advanced ; and *the public opinion* of the civilized world is rapidly gaining an ascendancy over mere brutal force. It may be silenced by military power, but it cannot be conquered. It is elastic, irrepressible, and invulnerable to the weapons of ordinary warfare. It is that impassable, inextinguishable enemy of mere violence and arbitrary rule, which, like Milton’s angels,

‘ Vital in every part,
Cannot, but by annihilating, die.’

Unless this be propitiated or satisfied, it is in vain for power to talk either of triumphs or repose. No matter what fields are desolated, what fortresses surrendered, what armies subdued, or what provinces overrun, there is an enemy that still exists to check the glory of these triumphs. It follows the conqueror back to the very scene of his ovations ; it

calls upon him to take notice that the world, though silent, is yet indignant; it shows him that the sceptre of his victory is a barren sceptre; that it shall confer neither joy nor honor, but shall moulder to dry ashes in his grasp. In the midst of his exultation, it pierces his ear with the cry of injured justice; it denounces against him the indignation of an enlightened and civilized age; it turns to bitterness the cup of his rejoicing, and wounds him with the sting which belongs to the consciousness of having outraged the opinion of mankind."

In the course of this speech, Mr. Webster adverted, in terms of reprobation, to the Treaty of Paris, of 1815, by which the principles that bound together the "Holy Alliance" were asserted and maintained. He expressed his abhorrence of the doctrines thus sought to be enforced by European despotisms, and remarked: "Human liberty may yet, perhaps, be obliged to repose its principal hopes on the intelligence and the vigor of the Saxon race. So far as depends on us, at least, I trust those hopes will not be disappointed."

Mr. Webster also took an active part in the discussions upon the Tariff in 1824. In common with the remainder of the Massachusetts delegation, he opposed that instrument on grounds of expediency, but the bill was passed and became a law.

In the Fall of 1824, Mr. Webster was reelected to Congress, by the almost unanimous vote of 4,990 out of 5000. This remarkable indication of the public favor was as unexpected as well-merited and gratifying. Mr. Webster was now fairly settled in a

public career, and he was thenceforward but rarely absent from stations of trust and confidence.

The Presidential contest in which John Quincy Adams was finally successful, now agitated the country. Mr. Clay accepted the post of Secretary of State. The principal topic of this Administration was the Panama Mission, a subject of dispute, which created a great sensation, and elicited many warm debates in Congress. Mr. Webster had supported with earnestness, the noted Declaration of President Monroe,—that any combinations of European powers to promote certain objects in America would be considered as directly affecting the Nation,—and, in accordance with the position he had assumed, gave a cordial support to the proposed Mission to Panama, for the settlement of existing difficulties. He made an able speech on this subject in the House, in April, 1826. The general unpopularity of the measure in contemplation, however, caused it to fail.

On the 22d December, 1820, at the second Centennial Celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Mr. Webster delivered the grand Oration which is now in the mouth of every schoolboy. Five years afterward, in 1825, he spoke at Bunker Hill, at the semi-centennial Celebration of the glorious Battle which had there been fought. In a few months he was called to commemorate the services of Adams and Jefferson, whose deaths occurred under circumstances of such curious coincidence. On the 22d February, 1832, upon the completion of a century from the birth of Washington, Mr. Webster was called upon to deliver an Address at the National

Capital, and enchaind the attention of his audience, by a fascinating delineation of the virtues of the Father of his Country.

In November, 1826, Mr. Webster was again solicited to represent his District in the House, for the third time, but before he had taken his seat, a vacancy occurring in the Senate by the retirement of the venerable Elijah H. Mills, Mr. Webster was chosen to fill that post.

Toward the close of the year 1827, a heavy domestic affliction was visited upon Mr. Webster, in the loss of his wife. They were on the way to Washington when Mrs. Webster was taken ill, and soon died. This melancholy event prevented Mr. Webster from taking his seat in the Senate until January, 1828.

In the Senatorial career of Mr. Webster, so many elements of power and popularity have passed into record, that it is difficult to embrace, in a simple sketch, all the peculiar features of the great movements in which he took part. Mr. Calhoun, as Vice-President, occupied the chair of the Senate. Messrs. Forsyth, Benton, Van Buren, Woodbury, Tazewell, Clayton and Hayne, were among the Senators. Mr. Webster's first parliamentary encounter, upon his entrance into the Senate, took place with Mr. Tazewell, of Virginia. The subject in dispute was the Process Bill, contrived for the regulation of the proceedings of the United States Courts, and the details of the controversy had little public interest. Mr. Webster afterward made strong and praiseworthy exertions in aid of the measures of relief to the surviving officers of the Revolution. In regard to the Tariff, upon which the

controversy of past days was renewed, Mr. Webster deemed it his duty to vote for the amended bill introduced into the Senate. In the course of his remarks upon certain objections which he had urged against the measure, and for which he sought an improvement, he defended New-England from the injurious reports that had been circulated against her, and established anew the credit of that large and industrious section of the country. Though disapproving of some of the provisions contained in the amended bill, he yet believed it an improvement in certain particulars, and gave it his affirmative vote—a course which he deemed it but just to explain to his constituents upon his return home. In a speech at Faneuil Hall he made particular allusion to the circumstances of that vote, and received the approval of the people of the Commonwealth.

DEBATE WITH HAYNE.

The next event in Mr. Webster's life was one which won imperishable laurels for himself, and cast lustre upon the councils of his country. It was the part he took in the great controversy in the Senate between the North and South—between the national views of the Constitution which Mr. Webster had often vindicated, and the doctrines of State Rights, which had been for years so ably enforced by Mr. Calhoun, and had reached a position of commanding influence.

Gen. Jackson had been elected to the Presidency in the Fall of 1828, by an overwhelming popular majority, against John Quincy Adams, whose adminis-

tration, although marked by signal ability, and a purity seldom paralleled in the recent history of our Government, had failed to fasten itself upon the popular sympathy. Mr. Adams was a man of sharp intellect, multifarious knowledge, large experience in public affairs, and of cold, calm courage, but without a spark of enthusiasm in his nature, or any of those qualities which command the attachment and secure the support of great masses of men. Gen. Jackson, on the contrary, lacking all the faculties which his opponent had, possessed all those which he lacked. A man of clear perceptions, prompt and generous impulses—unflinching as a friend and relentless as a foe—daring in action, and of unconquerable will, and conspicuous in the eyes of the whole country for his victory at New Orleans in the war of 1812, he had come into power by a larger majority than had ever before been given to any candidate. And among his friends were those who had before been distinguished for devotion to Mr. Calhoun, and the friends of Mr. Crawford. Mr. Calhoun was chosen Vice-President at the same election. Thus, though overwhelmingly strong, the Democratic party was really composed of discordant materials—being divided especially upon the fundamental principles upon which our government rests—Mr. Calhoun and his friends, insisting upon a strict construction of the Constitution, and the most rigid limitation of the powers of the General Government under it, and the other section inheriting by legitimate descent the more liberal and national doctrines of Madison and Monroe, and being friendly to the protection of American industry, and

the prosecution of works of internal improvement. Both these parties were, however, at this time, united in cordial support of Gen. Jackson, and in an equally cordial hostility to the leaders of the party against which he had been elected, and among these leaders Mr. Webster, of course, stood pre-eminent.

The first session of the Twenty-first Congress opened in December, 1829, Mr. Calhoun presiding in the Senate. Prominent among the topics to which political attention was directed, was that of the public lands. Both parties, and especially both sections of the country, the North and the South, were anxious to secure the political alliance of the Western States; and although the measures of each were doubtless dictated mainly by a sincere regard for the public good, it is not uncharitable to suppose that political purposes had more or less influence with both. Little, however, had been said upon the subject until Mr. Foote of Connecticut, on the 29th of December, introduced the following apparently innocent resolution of inquiry:—

Resolved—That the Committee on Public Lands be instructed to inquire and report the quantity of public lands remaining unsold within each State and Territory, and whether it be expedient to limit for a certain period the sales of public lands, to such lands as have heretofore been offered for sale, and are now subject to entry at the *minimum* price. And also, whether the office of Surveyor General, and some of the landed offices, may not be abolished, without detriment to the public service.

It has been alleged that this resolution was in

reality the signal and starting point of a predetermined crusade, on the part of General Jackson's friends, against New England, and especially Mr. Webster, as its most conspicuous and formidable representative. At the time, however, no such purpose was suspected ; and it is only by reverting to the concurrent features of the case that subsequent examination has brought circumstantial evidence in support of the charge. Mr. Webster, it is certain, was just at that time made the shining mark for the combined attacks of the party in power. The party press throughout the country sought to evince its devotion to Gen. Jackson by assault upon Mr. Webster. The leading friends of the President and Vice-President, in both Houses of Congress and throughout the country, aimed their most powerful blows at his head, with an energy and determination which might well suggest the suspicion of a preconcerted purpose. It seems more likely, however, that this was simply the result of the position of parties and of their prominent men. The Presidential contest had been marked by great warmth and bitterness, and this zeal had not been in the least diminished by the complete success by which it had been crowned. The dominant party, on the contrary, seemed the more resolute in its purpose of destroying and annihilating all opposition—and as New England was the citadel of that hostility, and Mr. Webster the solitary but formidable champion who defended its gates, and hurled the crushing missiles of war from its unconquered towers, it was natural, and indeed inevitable, that their main assault should be turned against him, and the section which he represented. The day after

Mr. Foote offered his resolution, on calling it up for consideration, he said he had presented it from having seen a statement in the last report of the Commissioners of the Land Office, that the quantity of land remaining unsold at the minimum price of one dollar and a quarter per acre, exceeded seventy-two millions of acres—while the annual demand was not likely greatly to exceed one million acres—and he was desirous of further official information upon the subject.

Senator Benton, of Missouri,—then, as now, wide awake and keenly suspicious of designs upon himself and the West, whenever any Western topic was touched in debate,—scented the battle afar off, in this formal and ostensibly harmless resolution. He stigmatized it at once as a resolution of inquiry into the expediency of committing a serious injury upon the new States of the West. Mr. Foote earnestly disclaimed any such purpose, and several other Senators vindicated the resolution from any such construction. After a brief and colloquial controversy, not wholly void of feeling, upon this point, a motion was carried postponing the further consideration of the subject until Monday, the 11th of January, for which day it was made the special order. When that day arrived it was again postponed until the 13th; and then, after several Western gentlemen had spoken briefly upon it, it was laid over until Monday, the 18th. On that day, and evidently after much preparation, and an evident nursing of his political wrath, Mr. Benton took the floor against the resolution. His speech was the development of the idea he had put forth at the outset,—that the resolution was aimed at the

West ; and he proceeded to show that the attack came from New England, and that it was really directed against *him*. "The resolution," said he, "was introduced to check-mate my graduation bill ! It was an offer of battle to the West ! I accepted the offer ; I am fighting the battle ; some are crying out and hauling off ; but I am standing to it, and mean to stand to it. I call upon the adversary to come on and lay on ; and I tell him,

'Damn'd be he that first cries hold,—enough !' "

Col. Benton proceeded to a studied attack upon New England,—to a denunciation of her policy towards the West as illiberal and unjust,—and to the declaration that the West would thereafter look *to the South* for succor. This was the key-note of the debate that followed. The real merits of the question rapidly gave way to a discussion of the relative position of different sections of the country towards it. The next day Mr. Holmes, of Maine, replied at length to Mr. Benton. Other Senators also participated in the discussion, and finally Col. Hayne, of South Carolina, commenced a speech which consumed the rest of the day.

Hayne was one of the younger Senators,—of undoubted ability and over-confident courage. He had filled with *éclat* successive offices of trust and responsibility in his native State, and brought to the Senate in 1823 a brilliant and growing reputation. His characteristics have been well set forth by Mr. March in his "Reminiscences of Congress." "Hayne," he says, "dashed into debate like the Mameluke cavalry

upon a charge. There was a gallant air about him, that could not but win admiration. He never provided for retreat: he never imagined it. He had an invincible confidence in himself, which arose partly from constitutional temperament, partly from previous success. His was the Napoleonic warfare: to strike at once for the Capitol of the enemy, heedless of danger or loss to his own forces. Not doubting to overcome all odds, he feared none, however seemingly superior. Of great fluency and no little force of expression, his speech never halted, and seldom fatigued. His oratory was graceful and persuasive. An impassioned manner, somewhat vehement at times, but rarely, if ever extravagant: a voice well modulated and clear: a distinct, though rapid enunciation: a confident, but not often offensive address: these, accompanying and illustrating language well selected and periods well turned, made him a popular and effective speaker." In his speech at this stage of the debate, Col. Hayne took occasion to respond to Col. Benton, by assuring him that the West might always count upon the sympathies of the South, and by echoing and strengthening the assaults he had made upon the character and condition of New England. He alleged that the East was not willing that the public lands should be thrown open on easy terms to settlers for fear of being drained of its population. The Eastern States, he said, had always sought to retain their population at home—"to create a manufactory of paupers, who should supply the manufactories of rich proprietors, and enable them to amass great wealth." He followed up this attack upon the policy

of New England with great bitterness,—characterizing her course on the public lands especially, as selfish and unprincipled. Neither Mr. Webster nor his friends could help feeling sensitive under such assaults, and point was given to their resentment by the belief that they were mainly directed against Mr. Webster personally, and were intended as much to crush him as to promote the welfare of the West. At the previous session, Col. Hayne had made a sharp attack upon his opinions and conduct, to which, however, he had forborne to make any reply. But upon this occasion, he felt called on to respond; and on the next day, therefore, he spoke at some length in reply,—confining himself clearly to the topic under discussion, and referring only incidentally to the temper in which the debate had been conducted on the part of his opponents. His speech was little more, indeed, than a very clear and well-digested historical statement of the actual steps taken by the General Government in regard to the public lands, and of the part which New England had borne in that action. He depicted with graphic power the wonderful changes which had taken place in the Western States,—their rapid and marvellous increase of population, and the almost magic transformation of their unbroken forests into the abodes of civilization and comfort. And in regard to the measures of the General Government by which this change had been wrought, he “undertook to say,” in general terms—sustaining this statement, however, by reference to the records of Congress—that “if you look to the votes on any one of these measures, and strike out from the list of ayes

the names of New England members, it will be found that in *every case* the South would then have *voted down* the West, and the measure would have failed." This sweeping declaration, made with exactness and emphasis, was a direct acceptance of the issue made, between the North and South, in regard to the respective conduct of each section towards the West. He closed by apologizing for thus alluding to local opinions and contrasting different portions of the country—a course which, he said, had been forced upon him by charges and imputations on the public character and conduct of the State which he represented, which he knew to be undeserved and unfounded. "While I stand here," said he, "as representative of Massachusetts, I will be her true representative, and, by the blessing of God, I will vindicate her character, motives and history from every imputation coming from a respectable source." Col. Benton followed Mr. Webster, and at once commenced a speech in reply. The next day (Thursday, the 21st), Mr. Chambers, of Maryland, expressed a hope that the Senate would postpone the further consideration of the subject until the next Monday, as Mr. Webster, who desired to be present whenever it should be resumed, had pressing engagements in another quarter, and could not conveniently attend in the Senate. It was well understood that the legal case of a good deal of importance, in which John Jacob Astor and the State of New-York were parties, and in which Mr. Webster was of counsel—was pending in the Supreme Court, and the argument had actually commenced on the 20th. Col. Hayne, however, resented the

suggestion of postponement. He said " he saw the gentleman from Massachusetts in his seat, and presumed he could make an arrangement which would enable him to attend." He was unwilling that the subject should be postponed until he could reply to certain observations which had fallen from Mr. Webster the day before. Unable, and not caring, to restrain evidences of the feeling which Mr. Webster's speech had excited, he confessed that some things had fallen from him on that occasion which rankled here (touching his heart), and he desired at once to relieve himself. "The gentleman," he said, "has discharged his fire in the face of the Senate; and I hope the opportunity will now be afforded me of returning the shot." The menaces implied in this language, of course, left Mr. Webster no alternative. With swelling chest and lofty dignity of manner, he exclaimed: "Let the discussion proceed. I am ready. I am ready *now* to receive the gentleman's fire." The discussion, of course, did proceed. Col. Benton finished his speech; and Mr. Bell, of New Hampshire, then moved that the further consideration of the subject be postponed until Monday. This was lost by a party vote. And Col. Hayne at once commenced his speech in reply to Mr. Webster.

He spoke on that occasion for about an hour. He began by disavowing having had any purpose of charging any section of the country with hostility to any other, and by professing surprise at the manner in which his remarks had been received. He had questioned no man's opinion; he impeached no man's motives. The Senator from Missouri had indeed

charged upon the Northern States an early and continued hostility towards the West; but, after deliberating a whole night, the gentleman from Massachusetts had come into the Senate to vindicate New England, and, instead of making up his issue with the gentleman from Missouri, on the charge which he had preferred, said Col. H., "he chooses to consider *me* as the author of those charges; selects me as his adversary, and pours out all the vials of his mighty wrath upon my devoted head. Nor is he willing to stop there. He goes on to assail the institutions and policy of the South, and calls in question the principles and conduct of the State which I have the honor to represent." Col. Hayne went on to suggest reasons for this course on the part of Mr. Webster. "Has he discovered," he asked, "in former controversies with the gentleman from Missouri, that he is *over-matched* by that Senator; and does he hope for an easy victory over a more feeble adversary? Has his distempered fancy been disturbed by gloomy forebodings of the 'new alliances to be formed,' at which he hinted? Has the ghost of the murdered Coalition come back, like the ghost of the murdered Banquo, to 'sear the eyeballs' of the gentleman, and will it not 'down at his bidding?' Are dark visions of broken hopes and honors lost for ever still floating before his heated imagination?" And he proceeded to say that he would not suffer Mr. Webster thus to thrust him between the gentleman from Missouri and himself, in order to rescue the East from the contest with the West, which he had provoked. "The South shall not be forced into a

conflict not its own. The gallant West needs no aid from the South to repel any attack which may be made on them from any quarter." With this exordium, well calculated to stimulate interest and to prepare the way for a severe personal collision, Col. Hayne went on to repel the idea that the West had grown great in consequence of the measures of the General Government, upon which Mr. Webster had pronounced what he styled an extravagant eulogium. He ridiculed also the pretensions preferred by Mr. Webster to prominence as a statesman, on behalf of "a certain Nathan Dane, of Beverley, Massachusetts," who was only known to the South, he said, as "a member of a celebrated Assembly, called and known by the name of the Hartford Convention." His next point was to show that in 1825 Mr. Webster had held and expressed upon the subject of the public lands precisely the views which he himself had now advanced, and which Mr. Webster had assailed. "In 1825," said he, "the gentleman told the world that the public lands 'ought not to be treated as a treasure.' He now tells us that they 'must be treated as so much treasure.' What the deliberate opinion of the gentleman on this subject may be belongs not to me to determine; but I do not think he can, with the shadow of justice or propriety, impugn my sentiments, while his own recorded opinions are identical with my own." Col. H. next took up Mr. Webster's claim that the East had always shown its friendliness towards the West, by favoring internal improvements, from which the South had been deterred by its constitutional scruples. He alleged, in reply, that

the only occasion in which the East had thus favored the West was in 1825, when the presidential election was pending in the House of Representatives. There it was, he said, that "a happy union between the members of the celebrated *coalition* was consummated, whose immediate issue was a President from one quarter of the Union, with the succession, as it was supposed, to another." Referring next to the intimation thrown out by Mr. Webster that the extraordinary fervor of the South for the payment of the national debt arose from a disposition to weaken the ties which bind the people to the Union, Col. H. repudiated the idea for the South, that a pecuniary dependence on the Federal Government was one of the legitimate means of holding the State together. And coming then to the claim of Mr. Webster that the transcendent prosperity of Ohio had been due in a great degree to the Ordinance of 1787, which had "secured to her a population of *free men*," Col. H. entered into an extended rebuke of this attack upon Southern slavery, contrasting the condition of the slaves with that of the free blacks of the North, denying that slavery was an element of weakness to the South, stigmatizing the friendship professed for the blacks as springing from the spirit of false philanthropy, which, like the father of evil, is constantly walking to and fro about the earth, seeking whom it may devour," and claiming that slavery had been the means of greatly elevating the individual character of the Southern people. He next assailed Mr. Webster's position in regard to the consolidation of the Government, provided for by the Constitution,—

insisting that the Union was not designed to be national but federal ; and, then referring to the subject of the Tariff, charged Mr. Webster with glaring inconsistency in having advocated Free Trade in 1824, and in 1828 having supported the Tariff which had been known ever since as the "bill of abominations."

Colonel Hayne closed his speech on that day by citing Mr. Webster's intimation that there was a party in the South who were looking to *disunion*. If the accusation had been vague and general, he said he should have passed it without notice. But as Mr. Webster had given to it a local habitation and a name, by quoting the expression of a distinguished citizen of South Carolina, (Dr. Cooper,) that "it was time for the South to calculate the value of the Union," and in the language of the bitterest sarcasm to add, "surely then the Union cannot last longer than July, 1831," it was impossible to mistake either the allusion or the object. And he finished by protesting that this controversy was not of his seeking ; that at the time this unprovoked and uncalled for attack was made upon the South, not one word had been uttered by him in disparagement of New England, nor had he the most distant allusion either to the Senator from Massachusetts, or the State which he represents. "But, sir," he added, "that gentleman has thought proper, for purposes best known to himself, to strike the South through me, the most unworthy of her servants. He has crossed the border, he has invaded the State of South Carolina, is making war upon her citizens, and endeavoring to overthrow her principles and her institutions. Sir,

when the gentleman provokes me to such a conflict, I meet him at the threshold. I will struggle while I have life, for our altars and our firesides—and if God gives me strength, I will drive back the invader discomfited. Nor shall I stop there. If the gentleman provokes the war, he shall have war. Sir, I will not stop at the border—I will carry the war into the enemy's territory, and not consent to lay down my arms until I have obtained indemnity for the past and security for the future. It is with unfeigned reluctance, Mr. President, that I enter upon the performance of this part of my duty—I shrink almost instinctively from a course, however necessary, which may have a tendency to excite sectional feelings and sectional jealousies. But, sir, the task has been forced upon me; and I proceed right onward to the performance of my duty. Be the consequences what they may, the responsibility is with those who have imposed upon me the necessity. The Senator from Massachusetts has thought proper to cast the first stone; and if he shall find, according to a homely adage, that he 'lives in a glass-house,' on his head be the consequences." And with this formidable warning, savoring far more of arrogant confidence than of dignity and good taste, Col. Hayne gave way to a motion to adjourn until Monday, which was carried. The intervening time was spent in preparing to rivet and strengthen the impression already made against Mr. Webster. The boldness of the attack, the direct personality which the debate had assumed, and the vehemence of the orator's language and manner, had given great force to the speech; and it was

generally felt that he had made a formidable and effective onset. Colonel Hayne was warmly congratulated by all his party friends upon his success, and was stimulated to renewed assaults. The party press swelled the acclamations with which his speech was greeted, and extolled it as the greatest effort of ancient or of modern times. Mr. Webster's friends, moreover, were not free from misgivings. Though by no means lacking confidence in the ability of their great leader, they had never seen him exposed to an attack of precisely this character, and could not, therefore, be fully assured as to the manner in which he would meet it. Some of the friends of Colonel Hayne, it is said, who had felt Mr. Webster's power directed against themselves, were by no means sure that the victory would rest with their own champion. To a friend of Hayne, who was praising his speech, Mr. Iredell, of South Carolina, remarked; "He has started the lion, but wait till we hear him roar, or feel his claws." On Monday, in continuing his speech, Col. Hayne spoke, first, in impassioned terms of the services rendered to the country by South Carolina, during the war of the Revolution, in the political crisis of 1798, and during the war of 1812; and he then proceeded to a detailed denunciation of the conduct of New England, and especially of Massachusetts, in that contest with Great Britain, alleging that they had taken sides with the enemy and against their own country, and sustaining his accusations by copious citations from the federal newspapers, partisan speeches, and the pulpit declamations of that day. He then entered upon an exposition

and vindication of the theory of the Federal Government as held by the South, in opposition to the theory of Consolidation, for which, as he alleged, Mr. Webster was contending, quoting Jefferson and Madison, and resolutions passed by the Legislatures of several Southern States, in support of his view, and closing his speech by an earnest declaration that in all the steps she had taken to resist the encroachments and usurpations of the Federal Government, South Carolina was acting on a principle she had always held sacred, "resistance to unauthorized taxation." "Sir," he exclaimed in conclusion, "if acting on these high motives—if animated by that ardent love of liberty which has always been the most prominent trait of the Southern character—we should be hurried beyond the bounds of a cold and calculating prudence, who is there with one noble and generous sentiment in his bosom, that would not be disposed, in the language of Burke, to exclaim, 'You must pardon something to the spirit of Liberty.'"

The onset was over. And, as would have been the case had the attack been less formidable than it was, victory rested with the only party whose forces had been displayed. Mr. Webster immediately rose to reply, but, as it was late in the day, he gave way to a motion to adjourn. Everywhere during the evening and night following, the speech was canvassed. "The town," says Mr. March, "was divided into geographical opinions. One's home could be distinguished from his countenance or manner; a Southerner's by his buoyant, joyous expression and confident air; a Yankee's by his timid, anxious eye and de-

pressed bearing. One walked with a bold determined step that courted observation; the other with a hesitating, shuffling gait, that seemed to long for some dark corner, some place to hear and see, and be unseen." Mr. Webster felt entirely conscious of ability to meet both the argument and the assault, and was perfectly calm and self-possessed. Mr. Everett, recording a conversation which he had with Mr. Webster at the time, speaks of the dry business-tone in which he talked and read over to him, the points he intended to make, as giving him some uneasiness for fear he was not sufficiently aware how much was expected of him the next day. He had, of course, taken full notes of Col. Hayne's speech, and had given to each part of it a careful and exhaustive consideration. Not a quotation nor an allusion had escaped him. It is mentioned that, while lying down after dinner, he was overheard, by a friend, laughing to himself. On being asked what amused him so, he replied, "I have been thinking of the way in which Col. Hayne's quotation about Banquo's ghost, can be turned against himself; and I am going to get up and make a note of it,"—which he immediately did. The scenes and incidents of the next day are so vividly presented in one of the chapters of Mr. March's *Reminiscences*, and the sketch has so much of literary, as well as biographical interest, that we transfer it, with trifling omissions, to our columns.

It was on Tuesday, January the 26th, 1830,—a day to be hereafter for ever memorable in Senatorial annals,—that the Senate resumed the consideration of Foote's Resolution. There never was before, in

the city, an occasion of so much excitement. To witness this great intellectual contest, multitudes of strangers had for two or three days previous been rushing into the city, and the hotels overflowed. As early as 9 o'clock of this morning, crowds poured into the Capitol in hot haste; at 12 o'clock, the hour of meeting, the Senate Chamber,—its galleries, floors, and even lobbies,—was filled to its utmost capacity. The very stairways were dark with men, who hung on to one another, like bees in a swarm.

The House of Representatives was early deserted. An adjournment would have hardly made it emptier. The Speaker, it is true, retained his chair, but no business of moment was, or could be attended to. Members all rushed in to hear Mr. Webster, and no call of the House or other parliamentary proceedings could compel them back. The floor of the Senate was so densely crowded that persons once in, could not get out, nor change their position; in the rear of the Vice-Presidential chair, the crowd was particularly intense. Dixon H. Lewis, then a representative from Alabama, became wedged in here. From his enormous size, it was impossible for him to move, without displacing a vast portion of the multitude. Unfortunately too, for him, he was jammed in directly behind the chair of the Vice-President, where he could not see, and hardly hear, the speaker. By slow and laborious effort—pausing occasionally to breathe, he gained one of the windows, which, constructed of painted glass, flank the chair of the Vice-President on either side. Here he paused unable to make more headway. But determined to see Mr.

Webster as he spoke, with his knife he made a large hole in one of the panes of the glass; which is still visible as he made it. Many were so placed, as not to be able to see the speaker at all.

The courtesy of Senators accorded to the fairer sex room on the floor—the most gallant of them, their own seats. The gay bonnets and brilliant dresses threw a varied and picturesque beauty over the scene, softening and embellishing it.

Seldom, if ever, has speaker in this or any other country had more powerful incentives to exertion; a subject, the determination of which, involved the most important interests, and even duration, of the republic; competitors, unequalled in reputation, ability, or position; a name to make still more glorious, or lose for ever; an audience comprising not only persons of this country most eminent in intellectual greatness, but representatives of other nations, where the art of eloquence had flourished for ages. All the soldier seeks in opportunity was here.

Mr. Webster perceived, and felt equal to the destinies of the moment. The very greatness of the hazard exhilarated him. His spirits rose with the occasion. He awaited the time of the onset with a stern and impatient joy. He felt like the war-horse of the Scriptures,—who “paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: who goeth on to meet the armed men,—who sayeth among the trumpets, Ha, ha! and who smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting.”

A confidence in his own resources, springing from no vain estimate of his power, but the legitimate off-

spring of previous severe mental discipline sustained and excited him. He had gauged his opponents, his subject and *himself*.

He was too, at this period, in the very prime of manhood. He had reached middle age—an era in the life of man, when the faculties, physical or intellectual, may be supposed to attain their fullest organization, and most perfect development. Whatever there was in him of intellectual energy and vitality, the occasion, his full life and high ambition, might well bring forth.

He never rose on an ordinary occasion, to address an ordinary audience, more self-possessed. There was no tremulousness in his voice or manner; nothing hurried, nothing simulated. The calmness of superior strength was visible everywhere; in countenance, voice and bearing. A deep-seated conviction of the extraordinary character of the emergency, and of his ability to control it, seemed to possess him wholly. If an observer, more than ordinarily keen-sighted, detected at times something like exultation in his eye, he presumed it sprang from the excitement of the moment, and the anticipation of victory.

The anxiety to hear the speech was so intense, irrepressible and universal, that no sooner had the Vice-President assumed the chair, than a motion was made, and unanimously carried, to postpone the ordinary preliminaries of senatorial action, and take up, immediately, the consideration of the resolution.

Mr. Webster rose and addressed the Senate. His exordium is known by heart everywhere: "Mr. Presi-

dent, when the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather, and on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance of the sun, to take his latitude, and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course. Let us imitate this prudence; and before we float further on the waves of this debate, refer to the point from which we departed, that we may, at least, be able to form some conjecture where we now are. I ask for the reading of the resolution."

There wanted no more to enchain the attention. There was a spontaneous, though silent expression of eager approbation, as the orator concluded these opening remarks; and while the Clerk read the resolution, many attempted the impossibility of getting nearer the speaker. Every head was inclined closer towards him, every ear turned in the direction of his voice—and that deep, sudden, mysterious silence followed, which always attends fulness of emotion. From the sea of upturned faces, before him, the orator beheld his thoughts reflected as from a mirror. The varying countenance, the suffused eye, the earnest smile, and ever-attentive look, assured him of his audience's entire sympathy. If among his hearers there were those who affected, at first, an indifference to his glowing thoughts and fervent periods, the difficult mask was soon laid aside, and profound, undisguised, devoted attention followed. In the earlier part of his speech, one of his principal opponents seemed deeply engrossed in the careful perusal of a newspaper he held before his face; but this, on near-

er approach, proved to be *upside down*. In truth, all, sooner or later, voluntarily, or in spite of themselves, were wholly carried away by the eloquence of the orator.

One of the happiest retorts ever made in a forensic controversy, was his application of Hayne's comparison of the ghost of the "murdered coalition" to the Ghost of Banquo:

"Sir, the honorable member was not, for other reasons, entirely happy in his allusions to the story of Banquo's murder and Banquo's ghost. It was not, I think, the friends, but the enemies of the murdered Banquo, at whose bidding his spirit would not *down*. The honorable gentleman is fresh in his reading of the English classics, and can put me right if I am wrong; but, according to my poor recollection, it was at those who had begun with caresses and ended with foul and treacherous murder, that the gory locks were shaken. The ghost of Banquo, like that of Hamlet, was an honest ghost. It disturbed no innocent man. It knew where its appearance would strike terror, and who would cry out 'A ghost!' It made itself visible in the right quarter, and compelled the guilty and the conscience-smitten, and none others, to start, with,

'Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo,
If I stand here, I saw him!'

Their eyeballs were seared (was it not so, sir?) who had thought to shield themselves, by concealing their own hand, and laying the imputation of the crime on a low and hireling agency in wickedness; who had

vainly attempted to stifle the workings of their own coward consciences, by ejaculating, through white lips and chattering teeth, 'Thou canst not say I did it!' I have misread the great poet if those who had no way partaken in the deed of death, either found that they were, or *feared that they should be*, pushed from their stools by the ghost of the slain, or exclaimed, to a spectre created by their own fears and their own remorse, "Avaunt! and quit our sight!"

There was a smile of appreciation upon the faces all around, at this most felicitous use of another's illustration—this turning one's own witness against him—in which Col. Hayne good-humoredly joined.

As the orator carried out the moral of Macbeth, and proved by the example of that deep thinking, intellectual, but insanely ambitious character, how little of substantial good or permanent power was to be secured by a devious and unblest policy, he turned his eye with a significance of expression, full of prophetic revelation upon the Vice-President, reminding him that those who had foully removed Banquo, had placed

"A barren sceptre in their gripe,
Thence to be wrenched by an unlineal hand,
No son of theirs succeeding."

Every eye of the whole audience followed the direction of his own, and witnessed the changing countenance and visible agitation of Mr. Calhoun.

Surely no prediction ever met a more rapid or fuller confirmation, even to the very manner in which the disaster was accomplished. Within a few brief

months, the political fortunes of the Vice-President, at this moment seemingly on the very point of culmination, had sunk so low, there were none so poor to do him reverence.

Whether, for a moment, a presentiment of the approaching crisis in his fate, forced upon his mind by the manner and language of the speaker, cast a gloom over his countenance, or some other cause, it is impossible to say; but his brow grew dark—nor for some time did his features recover their usual impassibility.

The allusion nettled him—the more, as he could not but witness the effect it produced upon others—and made him restless. He seemed to seek an opportunity to break in upon the speaker; and, later in the day, as Mr. Webster was exposing the gross and ludicrous inconsistencies of South Carolina politicians, upon the subject of internal improvements, he interrupted him with some eagerness: “Does the Chair understand the gentleman from Massachusetts to say that the person now occupying the Chair of the Senate has changed his opinions on this subject?” To this Mr. Webster replied immediately and good-naturedly: “From nothing ever said to me, sir, have I had reason to know of any change in the opinions of the person filling the Chair of the Senate. If such change has taken place, I regret it.”*

* Mr. Calhoun’s interruption was un-Parliamentary, or rather, un-Senatorial. The Vice-President is not a member of the Senate, and has no voice in it, save for the preservation of order and enforcement of the rules. He cannot participate otherwise, either in the debates or proceedings. He is simply the presiding offi-

Those who had doubted Mr. Webster's ability to cope with and overcome his opponents were fully satisfied of their error before he had proceeded far in his speech. Their fears soon took another direction. When they heard his sentences of powerful thought, towering in accumulative grandeur, one above the other, as if the orator strove, Titan-like, to reach the very heavens themselves, they were giddy with an apprehension that he would break down in his flight. They dared not believe that genius, learning, any intellectual endowment, however uncommon, that was simply mortal, could sustain itself long in a career seemingly so perilous. They feared an Icarian fall.

Ah! who can ever forget, that was present to hear, the tremendous, the *awful* burst of eloquence with which the orator spoke of the *Old Bay State!* or the tones of deep pathos in which the words were pronounced:

"Mr. President, I shall enter on no encomium

cer of the Senate, having no vote in its affairs, save on a tie. Had Mr. Webster made a direct, unmistakable allusion to him, Mr. Calhoun still could have replied through a friendly Senator, or the press. On this occasion he was too much excited to attend to the etiquette of his position. His feelings and his interest in the question made him forgetful of his duty.

Some time later than this, after a rupture had taken place between Gen. Jackson and himself, Mr. Forsyth, of Ga., on being interrupted by some (as he thought) uncalled for question or remark, rebuked him in an emphatic manner for violation of official etiquette. Mr. Van Buren, who ousted and succeeded him, always remained silent, placid, imperturbable in his seat, however personal or severe the attack upon him; and no Vice-President, since his day, has ever attempted to interfere with the discussions of the Senate.

upon Massachusetts. There she is—behold her, and judge for yourselves. There is her history: the world knows it by heart. The past, at least, is secure. There is Boston, and Concord, and Lexington, and Bunker Hill—and there they will remain for ever. The bones of her sons, falling in the great struggle for independence, now lie mingled with the soil of every State, from New England to Georgia, and there they will lie for ever. And, sir, where American Liberty raised its first voice; and where its youth was nurtured and sustained, there it still lives, in the strength of its manhood, and full of its original spirit. If discord and disunion shall wound it—if party strife and blind ambition shall hawk at and tear it—if folly and madness—if uneasiness, under salutary and necessary restraint—shall succeed to separate it from that Union, by which alone its existence is made sure, it will stand, in the end, by the side of that cradle in which its infancy was rocked; it will stretch forth its arm with whatever of vigor it may still retain, over the friends who gather round it; and it will fall at last, if fall it must, amidst the proudest monuments of its own glory, and on the very spot of its origin.”

What New England heart was there but throbbed with vehement, tumultuous, irrepressible emotion, as he dwelt upon New England sufferings, New England struggles, and New England triumphs during the war of the Revolution? There was scarcely a dry eye in the Senate; all hearts were overcome; grave judges and men grown old in dignified life turned aside their heads, to conceal the evidences of their emotion.

In one corner of the gallery was clustered a group of Massachusetts men. They had hung from the first moment upon the words of the speaker, with feelings variously but always warmly excited, deepening in intensity as he proceeded. At first, while the orator was going through his exordium, they held their breath and hid their faces, mindful of the savage attack upon him and New England, and the fearful odds against him, her champion;—as he went deeper into his speech, they felt easier; when he turned Hayne's flank on Banquo's ghost, they breathed freer and deeper. But now, as he alluded to Massachusetts, their feelings were strained to the highest tension; and when the orator, concluding his eulogium upon the land of their birth, turned, intentionally, or otherwise, his burning eye full upon them, *they shed tears like girls!*

No one who was not present can understand the excitement of the scene. No one, who was, can give an adequate description of it. No word-painting can convey the deep, intense enthusiasm, the reverential attention, of the vast assembly—nor limner transfer to canvas their earnest, eager, awe-struck countenances. Though language were as subtle and flexible as thought, it still would be impossible to represent the full idea of the scene. There is something intangible in an emotion, which cannot be transferred. The nicer shades of feeling elude pursuit. Every description, therefore, of the occasion, seems to the narrator himself most tame, spiritless, unjust.

Much of the instantaneous effect of the speech arose, of course, from the orator's delivery—the tones

of his voice, his countenance, and manner.* These die mostly with the occasion that calls them forth—the impression is lost in the attempt at transmission from one mind to another. They can only be described in general terms. “Of the effectiveness of Mr. Webster’s manner, in many parts,” says Mr. Everett, “it would be in vain to attempt to give any one not present the faintest idea. It has been my fortune to hear some of the ablest speeches of the greatest living orators on both sides of the water, but I must confess, I never heard any thing which so completely realized my conception of what Demosthenes was when he delivered the Oration for the Crown.”

Assuredly, Kean nor Kemble, nor any other masterly delineator of the human passions ever produced a more powerful impression upon an audience, or swayed so completely their hearts. This was *acting*,—not *to* the life,—but life itself.

* The personal appearance of Mr. Webster has been a theme of frequent discussion. He was at the time this speech was delivered twenty years younger than now. Time had not thinned nor bleached his hair; it was as dark as the raven’s plumage, surmounting his massive brow in ample folds. His eyes, always dark and deep set, enkindled by some glowing thought, shone from beneath his sombre, overhanging brow like lights, in the blackness of night, from a sepulchre. It was such a countenance as Salvator Rosa delighted to paint.

No one understood, or understands, better than Mr. Webster, the philosophy of dress; what a powerful auxiliary it is to speech and manner, when harmonizing with them. On this occasion he appeared in a blue coat and buff vest,—the Revolutionary colors of buff and blue;—with a white cravat; a costume, than which none is more becoming to his face and expression. This courtly particularity of dress adds no little to the influence of his manner and appearance.

No one ever looked the orator, as he did—" *os humerosque deo similis*," in form and feature how like a god. His countenance spake no less audibly than his words. His manner gave new force to his language. As he stood swaying his right arm, like a huge tilt-hammer, up and down, his swarthy countenance lighted up with excitement, he appeared amid the smoke, the fire, the thunder of his eloquence, like Vulcan in his armory forging thoughts for the gods!

The human face never wore an expression of more withering, relentless scorn, than when the orator replied to Hayne's allusion to the "murdered coalition." "It is," said Mr. W., "the very cast-off slough of a polluted and shameless press. Incapable of further mischief, it lies in the sewer, lifeless and despised. It is not now, sir, in the power of the honorable member to give it dignity or decency, by attempting to elevate it, and introduce it into the Senate. He cannot change it from what it is—an object of general disgust and scorn. On the contrary, the contact, if he choose to touch it, is more likely to drag him down, down to the place where it lies itself." He looked, as he spoke these words, as if the thing he alluded to was too mean for scorn itself—and the sharp, stinging enunciation made the words still more withering. The audience seemed relieved,—so crushing was the expression of his face which they held on to, as 'twere, spell-bound,—when he turned to other topics.

The good-natured yet provoking irony with which he described the imaginary though lifelike scene of direct collision between the marshalled array of

South Carolina under General Hayne on one side, and the officers of the United States on the other, nettled his opponent even more than his severer satire; it seemed so ridiculously true, that Col. Hayne inquired, with some degree of emotion, if the gentleman from Massachusetts intended any *personal* imputation by such remarks? To which Mr. Webster replied, with perfect good humor, "Assuredly not—just the reverse."

The variety of incident during the speech, and the rapid fluctuation of passions, kept the audience in continual expectation and ceaseless agitation. There was no chord of the heart the orator did not strike, as with a master hand. The speech was a complete drama of comic and pathetic scenes; one varied excitement; laughter and tears gaining alternate victory.

A great portion of the speech is strictly argumentative; an exposition of constitutional law. But grave as such portion necessarily is, severely logical, abounding in no fancy or episode, it engrossed throughout the undivided attention of every intelligent hearer. Abstractions, under the glowing genius of the orator, acquired a beauty, a vitality, a power to thrill the blood and enkindle the affections, awakening into earnest activity many a dormant faculty. His ponderous syllables had an energy, a vehemence of meaning in them that fascinated, while they startled. His thoughts, in their statuesque beauty merely, would have gained all critical judgment; but he realized the antique fable, and warmed the marble into life. There was a sense of power in his language—of power withheld and suggestive of still greater power,—that subdued, as by a spell of mystery, the hearts of all.

For power, whether intellectual or physical, produces in its earnest development a feeling closely allied to awe. It was never more felt than on this occasion. It had entire mastery. The sex, which is said to love it best and abuse it most, seemed as much or more carried away than the sterner one. Many who had entered the hall with light gay thoughts, anticipating at most a pleasurable excitement, soon became deeply interested in the speaker and his subject—surrendered him their entire heart; and, when the speech was over, and they left the hall, it was with sadder, perhaps, but, surely, with far more elevated and ennobling emotions.

The exulting rush of feeling with which he went through the peroration, threw a glow over his countenance, like inspiration. Eye, brow, each feature, every line of the face seemed touched, as with a celestial fire. All gazed, as at something more than human. So Moses might have appeared to the awe-struck Israelites, as he emerged from the dark clouds and thick smoke of Sinai, his face all radiant with the breath of divinity!

The swell and roll of his voice struck upon the ears of the spell-bound audience, in deep and melodious cadence, as waves upon the shore of the "far resounding" sea. The Miltonic grandeur of his words was the fit expression of his thought, and raised his hearers up to his theme. His voice, exerted to its utmost power, penetrated every recess and corner of the Senate—penetrated even the anterooms and the stairways, as he pronounced in deepest tones of pathos these words of solemn

significance: "When my eyes shall be turned to behold, for the last time, the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dis-severed, discordant, belligerent! on a land rent with civil feud, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the Republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre, not a stripe erased nor polluted, not a single star obscured, bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory as, 'What is all this worth?' Nor those other words of delusion and folly, 'Liberty first and Union afterwards;' but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dear to every American heart, *Liberty and Union, now and for ever, one and inseparable!*"

The speech was over, but the tones of the orator still lingered upon the ear, and the audience, unconscious of the close, retained their positions. The agitated countenance, the heaving breast, the suffused eye, attested the continued influence of the spell upon them. Hands that in the excitement of the moment had sought each other, still remained closed in an unconscious grasp. Eye still turned to eye, to receive and repay mutual sympathy; and everywhere around seemed forgetfulness of all but the orator's presence and words.

When the Vice-President, hastening to dissolve the spell, angrily called to order! order! there never was a deeper stillness—not a movement, not a gesture had been made—not a whisper uttered. Order! Silence could almost have heard itself, it was so supernaturally still. The feeling was too overpowering to allow expression by voice or hand. It was as if one was in a trance, all motion paralyzed.

But the descending hammer of the Chair awoke them, with a start—and with one universal, long-drawn, deep breath, with which the overcharged heart seeks relief,—the crowded assembly broke up and departed.

The New England men walked down Pennsylvania Avenue that day, after the speech, with a firmer step and bolder air—"pride in their port, defiance in their eye." You would have sworn they had grown some inches taller in a few hours' time. They devoured the way in their stride. They looked every one in the face they met, fearing no contradiction. They swarmed in the streets, having become miraculously multitudinous. They clustered in parties, and fought the scene over one hundred times that night. Their elation was greater by reaction. It knew no limits, or choice of expression. Not one of them but felt he had gained a personal victory. Not one, who was not ready to exclaim, with gushing eyes, in the fulness of gratitude, "Thank God, I too am a Yankee!"

In the evening Gen. Jackson held a levee at the White House. It was known, in advance, that Mr. Webster would attend it, and hardly had the hospit-

able doors of the house been thrown open, when the crowd that had filled the Senate-chamber in the morning rushed in and occupied the rooms. Persons a little more tardy in arriving found it almost impossible to get in, such a crowd oppressed the entrance.

Before this evening, the General had been the observed of all observers. His military and personal reputation, official position, gallant bearing, and courteous manners, had secured him great and merited popularity. His receptions were always gladly attended by large numbers—to whom he was himself the object of attraction.

But on this occasion, the room in which he received his company was deserted, as soon as courtesy to the President permitted. Mr. Webster, it was whispered, was in the East Room, and thither the whole mass hurried.

He stood almost in the centre of the room, hemmed in by eager crowds, from whom there was no escape, all pressing to get nearer to him. He seemed but little exhausted by the intellectual exertion of the day, severe as it had been. The flush of excitement still lingered and played upon his countenance, gilding and beautifying it like the setting sun its accompanying clouds.

All were eager to get a sight at him. Some stood on tip-toe, and some even mounted the chairs of the room. Many were presented to him. The dense crowd entering and retiring, moved round him, renewing the order of their ingress and egress, continually. One would ask his neighbor: "Where—which is Webster?"—"There, don't you see him—

that dark, swarthy man, with a great deep eye and heavy brow—that's Webster." No one was obliged to make a second inquiry.

In another part of the room was Col. Hayne. He, too, had his day of triumph, and received congratulations. His friends even now contended that the contest was but a drawn battle, no full victory having been achieved on either side. There was nothing in his own appearance this evening to indicate the mortification of defeat. With others, he went up and complimented Mr. Webster on his brilliant effort; and no one, ignorant of the past struggle, could have supposed that they had late been engaged in such fierce rivalry. It was said at the time, that, as Col. Hayne approached Mr. Webster to tender his congratulations, the latter accosted him with the usual courtesy, "How are you, this evening, Col. Hayne?" and that Col. Hayne replied, good-humoredly, "*None the better for you, sir!*"

The speech of Mr. Webster on this occasion is so familiar to the whole country, and this extended extract gives so complete a picture of its general scope, that any more specific outline of it would be superfluous. In mere logic, it has often been surpassed:—but as a *reply* to a violent attack,—as a defence against a vehement and formidable assault,—and as combining all the various qualities which such an effort demands, it is unrivalled in the forensic history of this country, and has seldom been surpassed anywhere. As a masterpiece in this special department of eloquence, it deserves careful study; and although a severe analysis of it may detract something

from the popular estimate of its character, as compared with the great speeches of the master Orators of the world, it will only quicken the admiration which it deserves for felicity of retort, adroitness in turning the flanks of the attacking force, the logical consecutiveness of its historical statements, and the grand, stately, imaginative eloquence of its rhetorical passages. No one can read both speeches without feeling that Hayne's did not deserve such a reply; and that the two *athletes* were most unequally matched. Col. Hayne replied to Mr. Webster, confining himself, however, to the single point of the rights of the General Government under the Constitution. Mr. Webster rejoined in a brief restatement of his argument:—but this restatement was in fact a reconstruction of it. He presented it now divested of all the incidental matter by which it had originally been embarrassed, and without any of the rhetorical attendants which had swollen its stateliness and rendered it far more impressive and imposing, but which nevertheless impaired its real strength. As an *argument* merely, we consider this second speech, brief and unpretending as it is, decidedly superior to the first, in the popularity of which, however, it has been completely overshadowed. Mr. Webster's "great speech," as it is universally known, produced a great sensation throughout the country. It was widely circulated and universally read. The debate continued for some weeks, but the argument had been exhausted, and the discussion was really at an end. Mr. Webster received from every quarter of the Union the most complimentary congratulations upon the re-

sult of the contest, and upon the service he had rendered the country. Massachusetts passed resolutions of thanks, and the example was followed by the Legislatures of several other States. Distinguished Southern gentlemen added the tribute of their praise.

MR. WEBSTER AND NULLIFICATION.

Mr. Webster continued to take an active part in the business and debates of the Senate throughout the administration of General Jackson and his immediate successor. This period of our history was marked by events of magnitude and permanent importance. As the characteristic of General Jackson's mind was an indomitable will, so his administration was marked by an exaltation of the Executive at the expense of every other department of the Government. Whenever he fixed upon a measure as desirable, the whole power at his command, personal and official, was directed to its enforcement. In one of his Messages, indeed, in reply to objections that the will of the people, as represented in Congress, should be paramount in all cases of legislation, he advanced the distinct claim that the popular sovereignty was in fact embodied in the President, as he was elected by a direct vote of all the people. This principle, and the spirit which it indicated, began to manifest themselves in various acts of the administration, and to arouse no slight degree of opposition to its arbitrary character throughout the country.

General Jackson had been elected by the union of various parties. Mr. Adams, his unsuccessful com-

petitor, in a letter written in 1836, but which has but recently been published in the New-York *Daily Times*, ascribes his defeat to the union of *four* distinct parties against him. "At the election of 1825," he says: "There were four candidates, three of whom were returned to the House of Representatives—besides a fifth, who had sunk by his own weight into the secondary rank of an aspirant to the Vice-Presidency—in which he succeeded for the moment, by the ruin of his after-prospects, I believe, for ever. My election was effected in the House by the junction of the fourth and excluded candidate's supporters with mine, and that operation produced the subsequent failure of my re-election, the triumphal elevation of my successor, and the irretrievable disappointment of him who had, as a last resource, linked his political fortunes with mine, but who, from that hour, was deserted and betrayed by his own party. They gained the coalition of the *three* preceding disappointed candidates, and thus left me at the election of 1828 to my own solitary strength. That remained unimpaired, but was unequal to the contest with the united power of the *four* parties combined against me, and I fell." It was scarcely possible that this union should long exist unimpaired after the success for which it had been formed had brought responsibility to be incurred and duties to be performed. Mr. Calhoun, whose friendship had been indicated, if not purchased, by being elected Vice-President, speedily found that he could have in that position no special influence or control in the Government; and the exclusion of all his friends

from the Cabinet, and the appointment, as Secretary of State, of Mr. Van Buren, who was Mr. Calhoun's rival for the succession, and as such favored by General Jackson, completed the alienation. Private differences aggravated the quarrel, and it soon became open and violent. Mr. Van Buren, disliking all elements of strife, resigned the Secretaryship, and accepted the Mission to England. But, while in office, he had given Mr. McLane, then our Minister to the Court of St. James, instructions to seek concessions in regard to our trade with the British colonies, and to represent, as an inducement to the British Government to grant them, that the party which had come into power would be found more favorable to certain interests which Great Britain wished to secure. When, therefore, his nomination came before the Senate, its confirmation was strongly opposed by Mr. Webster, who in this had the concurrence of Mr. Calhoun ; and it was rejected.

In the Twenty-second Congress the Bank question became prominent. At the first session (1831-2), a bill had been introduced by Mr. Dallas, providing for a recharter. Mr. Webster supported the bill, upon the ground that the Bank was highly important to the fiscal operations of the Government, and to the currency, exchange and general business of the country. The President had called the attention of Congress to the subject, without intimating any doubts of the constitutionality of the Bank. No complaints had been made of its management ; it was in good credit at home and abroad, and was generally popular as an important agent in the financial operations of

the country. The President, however, had endeavored to control the appointment of some of the officers in one of the Eastern branches, and this attempt had been resisted. This difference created a feeling of hostility and of mutual suspicion between the President and the Bank, and led to that open warfare which convulsed the country for some years. The bill passed both Houses, and was vetoed by General Jackson.

Meantime the interest in this subject was superseded by another of more pressing importance. In South Carolina discontent under the Tariff had greatly increased. Under the operation of the various protective tariffs which had been enacted with the concurrence, and generally under the lead of the South, a large manufacturing interest had grown up in the Northern and Central States,—while the South had not experienced similar benefits from them. Large tracts of new lands recently opened to settlement near the Mississippi, had drawn from the worn-out sections along the Atlantic great numbers of their people, and the injurious results of this process, as well as of other circumstances, were attributed to the Tariff. Public resentment at the South had been thus turned against the principle of protection, and its constitutionality had been strongly denied. The feeling of discontent had led to the most hostile language, and Mr. Calhoun, with other leading men in the same section of the country, had distinctly asserted the right of any State to resist and nullify laws which she might conceive unconstitutional or in violation of her rights. Mr. Webster had repeatedly

met Mr. Calhoun in argument upon this question, and had always maintained the supremacy of the Constitution and of the Supreme Court in the United States as the final interpreter of its provisions. In some of his speeches, especially in one made on the 26th of January, 1830, Mr. Webster made a triumphant vindication of the position he had taken upon this subject.

General Jackson was, however, re-elected President in the fall of 1832; and the people of South Carolina were at once roused into the most intense excitement against the North and the protective policy. Public meetings were held throughout the State, and at a general convention, an Ordinance was adopted, declaring the unconstitutionality of the tariff laws, and proclaiming the purpose of South Carolina to resist any attempt that might be made to collect taxes under them within the limits of that State. The Legislature, which met soon after, ratified the Ordinance; declared the Tariff acts unconstitutional, null, and void; directed the enrolment and enlistment of volunteers, and advised all the citizens to put themselves in military array. The whole State was in arms. Musters were held every day. Charleston looked like a military dépôt, and an immediate collision between the State and National forces was apprehended. Colonel Hayne resigned his seat in the United States Senate, and was elected Governor of South Carolina. Mr. Calhoun resigned the Vice-Presidency, and succeeded Hayne in the Senate. Congress met early in December, and the vacant chair was filled by the election of Hugh L. White, of

Tennessee, over John Tyler, of Virginia—White receiving seventeen, and Tyler fourteen votes. Mr. Calhoun had not arrived, and rumors were afloat that General Jackson had threatened to arrest him on his way, for treason against the Government. What course, indeed, the President would take was not known, but it had been the topic of current rumor for some months previous. Mr. Webster in October, had met the citizens of Massachusetts in a public meeting at Worcester, and had there rehearsed the dangers of the country, re-asserted the supremacy of the Constitution, and claimed for *Congress* the power of providing for the emergency. He raised his voice "beforehand, against the unauthorized employment of military power, and against suspending the authority of the laws, by an armed force, under the pretence of putting down nullification." Referring to a rumor of General Jackson's intended action, which had been widely current, he said: "The President has no authority to blockade Charleston; the President has no authority to employ military force, till he shall be duly required to do so by law and by the civil authority. His duty is to cause the laws to be executed. His duty is to support the civil authority. His duty is, if the laws be resisted, to employ the military force of the country, if necessary, for their support and execution: but to do all this in compliance only with law and with decisions of tribunals." The course pursued by the people of South Carolina roused the President from the inactivity which had only concealed, but had not prevented, a vigilant preparation for the rising storm. Confidential orders

were issued to the officers of the Army and Navy to hold themselves in readiness for active service. General Winfield Scott was sent to Charleston, to take such steps as he might deem necessary to preserve the authority of the Government. Prudent and resolute men were stationed at the proper posts; arms and munitions of war were provided, and due preparation was made for all contingencies. On the 11th of December, 1832, the President issued a Proclamation, written by Mr. Edward Livingston, who had succeeded Mr. Van Buren as Secretary of State, from notes furnished by General Jackson himself; and taking, substantially, the ground which Mr. Webster had uniformly maintained in debate upon the subject. A counter-Proclamation was at once issued by Governor Hayne; and laws were at once passed by the Legislature for putting the State in a condition to carry on war with the General Government. United States troops were collected at various points; and on the other side, the militia were drilled, muskets cleaned, foreign officers tendered their services to the Governor, and every thing indicated the speedy approach of civil war. At a large meeting of Nullifiers, held at Charleston, Colonel Preston, one of their leading men, set forth the state of the case by declaring that "there were sixteen thousand back-countrymen with arms in their hands and cockades in their hats, ready to march to that city at a moment's notice; and the moment Congress shall pass the laws recommended by the President in relation to our port, I will pour down a torrent of volunteers, that shall sweep the myrmidons of the

tyrant from the soil of Carolina." Mr. Calhoun did not reach Washington until January. On the 4th of that month he took his seat in the Senate, received the congratulations of the members of that body, and, in the midst of a crowded and eager assembly, took the oath to support the Constitution of the United States. In a few days he moved for a call upon the President for copies of the Proclamation, and of the counter-Proclamation of Governor Hayne. These were communicated by the President on the 16th of January; and on the 21st the "*Force Bill*," as it was called, "making further provision for the collection of the revenue," was reported by Mr. Wilkins, from Pennsylvania, on behalf of the Judiciary Committee. It gave the President the largest powers over the men and money of the nation, to put down any armed resistance to the revenue laws of the United States. Upon this bill, and upon resolutions which he introduced, embodying his general views on the right of a State to annul unconstitutional laws of Congress, Mr. Calhoun made, on the 15th and 16th of February, the ablest argument ever advanced in support of his position. The debate, previous to that time, had been shared by various Senators, and had been marked by various incidents. Mr. Webster had maintained silence, except in one or two instances, where he had thrown in a suggestion upon some incidental point. Of this nature was a remark which he made, when there seemed to be a general disposition to attack *the bill*, passing over the proclamation. Mr. Webster desired it should be known, once for all, "that this was an Administration measure; that it is the President's

own measure ; and I pray, gentlemen," said he, "to have the goodness, if they call it hard names, and talk boldly against its friends, not to overlook its source. Let them attack it, if they choose to attack it, in its origin." He had declined an invitation to speak upon the subject, so long as Mr. Calhoun had kept silent, or so long as the advantage in debate seemed to rest on the other side. But Mr. Calhoun's speech on this occasion called him out.

Mr. Calhoun's speech was awaited with great anxiety, and heard with eager interest. He was considered, beyond the bounds of his own State and party, as a bold, bad man. An all-devouring, unscrupulous personal ambition was popularly supposed to have driven him into this position of a conspirator against the Constitution. He was daily denounced as John *Catiline* Calhoun, by the special organ of the President, the *Globe*, and by the people at large he was feared as such. His personal appearance, as is remarked by the author already largely quoted, "answered well the preconceived idea of a conspirator. Tall, gaunt, and of a somewhat stooping figure, with a brow full, well-formed but receding ; hair, not reposing on the head, but starting from it like the Gorgon's ; a countenance, expressive of unqualified intellect, the lines of which seemed deeply gullied by intense thought ; an eye that watched every thing and revealed nothing, ever inquisitive, restless and penetrating ; and a manner emphatic, yet restrained, determined but cautious ; persons who knew not his antecedents, nor his actual position, would have pointed him out as one that might meditate great and dan-

gerous pursuits. To an audience, already embittered, he seemed to realize the full idea of a conspirator." His speech was a master-piece of direct, simple, unadorned argumentation. It very far surpassed, in every respect, the previous effort of Mr. Hayne. Its tone was that of injured innocence,—claiming always that South Carolina was the party wronged, repelling, with calm and sorrowful dignity, the imputations which had been thrown out against himself, lamenting plaintively the decay of fraternal feeling between different members of the Union, and sustaining by an elaborate argument of great cogency, the right of a State—not to resist the Constitution, not even to judge of the exercise by the General Government of any power which it delegates—but to repudiate utterly every assumption of power *not* delegated, and to resist, as null and void, every law that may be passed under any such assumption. His speech extended through two days:—and he closed by challenging the opponents of his doctrine to disprove them, and warned them, in the concluding sentence, that the principles they might advance would be subjected to the revision of posterity.

Mr. Webster rose immediately and entered upon a reply. He had been looked to, not only by his own political friends, but by the President and his party, as the champion upon whom would devolve the defence of the ground they had taken. The bill had received prompt modification, in several respects, upon his requirement,—and had thus been brought into more full conformity with the views he had expressed at Worcester. His speech on this occasion is one of the

best he ever made. Less showy, it is more logical, than his reply to Hayne, and although it produced a less powerful impression at the time upon the audience which heard it, it will be far more frequently referred to hereafter for the argument it embodies. He stated the theory of Mr. Calhoun in a few brief sentences, stripping it of all the qualifications by which that master of language and of thought had concealed its real meaning.

“Beginning with the original error, that the Constitution of the United States is nothing but a compact between Sovereign States; asserting in the next step, that each State has a right to be its own sole judge of the extent of its own obligations, and, consequently, of the constitutionality of laws of Congress; and in the next, that it may oppose whatever it sees fit to declare unconstitutional, and that it decides for itself on the mode and measure of redress, the argument arrives at once at the conclusion, that what a State dissents from, it may nullify; what it opposes, it may oppose by force; what it decides for itself, it may execute by its own power; and that, in short, it is itself supreme over the legislation of Congress, and supreme over the decisions of the national judicature—supreme over the Constitution of the country—supreme over the supreme law of the land. However it seeks to protect itself against these plain inferences, by saying that an unconstitutional law is no law, and that it only opposes such laws as are unconstitutional, yet this does not, in the slightest degree, vary the result, since it insists on deciding this question for itself; and, in opposition to reason and argument, in

opposition to practice and experience, in opposition to the judgment of others having an equal right to judge, it says only: 'Such is my opinion, and my opinion shall be my law, and I will support it by my own strong hand. I denounce the law. I declare it unconstitutional; that is enough; it shall not be executed. Men in arms are ready to resist its execution. An attempt to enforce it shall cover the land with blood. Elsewhere, it may be binding; but here, it is trampled under foot.' This, Sir, is practical nullification."

Against these positions Mr. Webster laid down a system embodied in the following propositions:

I. That the Constitution of the United States is not a league, confederacy, or compact, between the people of the several States in their sovereign capacities; but a Government proper, founded on the adoption of the people, and creating direct relations between itself and individuals.

II. That no State authority has power to dissolve those relations; that nothing can dissolve them but revolution; and that, consequently, there can be no such thing as secession without revolution.

III. That there is a supreme law, consisting of the Constitution of the United States, acts of Congress passed in pursuance of it, and treaties; and that, in cases not capable of assuming the character of a suit in law or equity, Congress must judge of, and finally interpret, this supreme law, so often as it has occasion to pass acts of legislation; and in cases capable of assuming, and actually assuming, the cha-

racter of a suit, the Supreme Court of the United States is the final interpreter.

IV. That an attempt by a State to abrogate, annul, or nullify an act of Congress, or to arrest its operation within her limits, on the ground that, in her opinion, such law is unconstitutional, is a direct usurpation on the just powers of the General Government, and on the equal rights of other States; a plain violation of the Constitution, and a proceeding essentially revolutionary in its character and tendency.

These propositions were maintained with great ability, without any attempt at sarcasm, humor, or anything but simple argument. The opinion generally entertained of its merit and conclusiveness is well indicated in a letter written to him very soon after its delivery, by Ex-President Madison. As Mr. Madison was largely concerned in drafting the famous resolutions of 1798, upon which the whole State Rights theory is generally based, his opinion upon this subject was, and still is, entitled to great weight. We think, therefore, that our readers will be glad to read his letter to Mr. Webster on that occasion, which has hitherto been published only in Mr. Everett's biographical sketch, prefixed to the recent edition of Mr. Webster's Speeches.

“MONTPELIER, March 15, 1833.

“MY DEAR SIR :—I return my thanks, &c., for the copy of your late very powerful speech in the Senate of the United States. It crushes “nullification,” and must hasten an abandonment of “seces-

sion." But this dodges the blow by confounding the claim to secede at will with the right of seceding from intolerable oppression. The former answers itself, being a violation, without cause, of a faith solemnly pledged. The latter is another name only for revolution, about which there is no theoretic controversy. Its double aspect, nevertheless, with the countenance received from certain quarters, is giving it a popular currency here, which may influence the approaching elections, both for Congress and for the State Legislature. It has gained some advantage, also, by mixing itself with the question whether the Constitution of the United States was formed by the people, or by the States, now under a theoretic discussion by animated partisans.

"It is fortunate when disputed theories can be decided by undisputed facts, and here the undisputed fact is, that the Constitution was made by the people, but as embodied into the several States who were parties to it—therefore made by the States in their highest authoritative capacity. They might, by the same authority, and by the same process, have converted the confederacy into a mere league or treaty, or continued it with enlarged or abridged power; or have embodied the people of their respective States into one people, nation, or sovereignty; or, as they did, by a mixed form, make them one people, nation, or sovereignty, for certain purposes, and not so for others.

"The Constitution of the United States, being established by a competent authority—by that of the sovereign people of the several States who were par-

ties to it—it remains only to inquire what the Constitution is; and here it speaks for itself. It organizes a government into the usual legislative, executive, and judiciary departments; invests it with specified powers, leaving others to the parties to the Constitution. It makes the government, like other governments, to operate directly on the people; places at its command the needful physical means of executing its powers; and, finally, proclaims its supremacy, and that of the laws made in pursuance of it, over the constitutions and laws of the States, the powers of the government being exercised, as in other elective and responsible governments, under the control of its constituents, the people and the Legislatures of the States, and subject to the revolutionary rights of the people in extreme cases.

“Such is the Constitution of the United States, *de jure* and *de facto*, and the name, whatever it be, that may be given to it, can make it nothing more or less than what it is.

“Pardon this hasty effusion, which, whether precisely according or not with your ideas, presents, I am aware, none that will be new to you.

“With great esteem and cordial salutations,

“JAMES MADISON.

“MR. WEBSTER.”

The bill, as is well known, passed—with the vote of John Tyler alone, in the negative; its other opponents having, from various reasons, left the Senate Chamber before the vote was taken. It is of course scarcely necessary to add, that Mr. Clay had

taken no part in this great debate, having been anxiously and laboriously engaged in elaborating and preparing the way for the *Compromise*, by which the dispute was at last adjusted. Mr. Webster's course in this crisis, commanded the warm approbation of General Jackson, who felt the extent of the service thus rendered to his administration. He took an early opportunity, in person, to express his cordial gratitude for his support, and his Secretary of State, Mr. Livingston, repeatedly made similar acknowledgments. It has been alleged that, mainly at Mr. Livingston's suggestion, General Jackson was strongly disposed to seek an alliance with Mr. Webster, founded upon the community of their principles upon this subject, which should extend to the whole of General Jackson's administration. It is alleged, on good authority, that Mr. Livingston, with the President's consent, consulted Mr. Webster upon the subject, and that a seat in the Cabinet was at the same time placed at his disposal. One fact, bearing upon this subject, is given by Mr. March, as upon authority. He states that a distinguished Senator, a political and personal friend of General Jackson, brought to Mr. Webster a list of intended nominees for office in the Eastern States, and asked him to erase therefrom the names of any who might be personally objectionable to him. This he declined to do, from an unwillingness to place himself under any obligation to the Administration, which might at all interfere with the freedom of his action. No one can avoid speculating as to the different political fortunes which might have overtaken the country, had the stern energy of Gen. Jackson

and the profound wisdom of Mr. Webster, been united in directing its destiny.

THE BANK CONTROVERSY.

The next great topic which enlisted public attention was well calculated,—and its introduction, by the leaders of the Democratic party, it has been charged, was designed—to render any such co-operation between these two commanding spirits out of the question. Mr. Webster, at the close of the session, made a short journey to the Middle and Western States. He was received everywhere with the most distinguished attention, being greeted by public meetings in all the principal cities, and making at various points addresses upon topics of public interest. Gen. Jackson also made a Northern tour during the same recess of Congress; and it was during that period that the removal of the public deposits from the Bank of the United States was determined on. It was carried into effect in September, 1833, and its immediate effect upon the business of the country was most disastrous. Congress met two months after; and one of the earliest movements in the Senate was the offering of a resolution by Mr. Clay, calling on the President for a copy of a paper said to have been read by him at a Cabinet meeting in regard to the removal of the deposits on the 18th of September. He supported the resolution in an animated speech, and it was adopted by a vote of 23 to 18,—the State-Rights men, on this occasion, abandoning General Jackson, and leaving the Administration in a minority. The President, in reply

to the resolution, declared his independence of the Senate, as a co-ordinate branch of the Government ; and he "had yet to learn under what constituted authority that branch of the Legislature had a right to require of him an account of any communication, either verbally or in writing, made to the heads of Departments in Cabinet Council." He therefore declined to comply with the request contained in the resolution. In the paper thus called for he had declared that he had decided upon the measure in question, and should carry it into effect upon his own responsibility, and without requiring any member of his Cabinet to make any sacrifice of opinion or of principle. For this he was severely denounced by the Opposition. Mr. Clay offered resolutions of substantial censure, and supported them in one of the ablest speeches he ever made. After a long and vehement debate, the resolutions, considerably modified by its author, passed the Senate,—one of them by a vote of 26 to 20, and the other 28 to 18. In the discussion upon these resolutions Mr. Webster took no part. But in reply to them, General Jackson sent to the Senate on the 17th of April, 1834, his memorable Protest, in which he argued with great ability, 1st, that the Executive, under the Constitution and the laws, is the sole custodian of the public funds; 2dly, that even on the supposition that he had assumed an illegal power, he was amenable to the action of either House, only through the constitutional process of impeachment; 3dly, that the President alone is responsible to the People alone for the conduct of all the subordinate Executive Officers, while they in turn

are responsible only to him ; and 4th, that he is the direct, immediate representative of the people. This formidable document, and the claim it preferred to the most extraordinary powers, aroused profound sensation, not only in the Senate, but throughout the country.

On the 7th of May, Mr. Webster delivered a speech upon the subject, in which he subjected every portion of that remarkable paper to the severest examination. At the opening and the close of his remarks he took occasion to disavow, in the most earnest manner, everything like personal or partisan feeling against the President, a man who, he said, "has rendered most distinguished services to his country, and whose honesty of motive and integrity of purpose are still maintained by those who admit that his administration has fallen into lamentable errors." But he regarded the doctrines of the Protest as at war with all sound principles of constitutional liberty, and as indicating a tendency on the part of the Executive towards a despotic usurpation of powers belonging to other departments, which called for the most prompt and determined resistance. Even if no harm should result from the claim, still it ought not to be allowed to pass unchallenged. "It was against the recital of an act of Parliament, rather than against any suffering under its enactment, that our fathers took up arms. They went to war against a preamble. They fought seven years against a declaration." Upon this question of principle, "while suffering was yet afar off, they raised their flag against a power to which, for purposes of foreign

conquest and subjugation, Rome, in the height of her glory, is not to be compared;—a power which has dotted the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England.”—

Mr. Webster asserted and vindicated, in the clearest manner, not only the right, but the duty, of the Senate, to defend the public liberty against encroachment, and to express its opinions whenever it believed such encroachment to have taken place. The Senate had acted in its legislative, and not in its judicial capacity, and in this action it had only defended its own just authority and that of the co-ordinate branch of the Legislature. He examined closely, and denounced with majestic emphasis, the extraordinary doctrines put forward by the President concerning the theory of his relations to the other branches of the Government, and to the People,—declaring that if these doctrines were true, it was “idle to talk any longer about any such thing as a government of laws. We have no government of laws—we have no legal responsibility. We have an Executive, consisting of one person, wielding all official power, and responsible only as Cromwell was responsible when he broke up Parliament, or Bonaparte when he dissolved the Assembly of France.”

The speech elicited the warmest commendations from distinguished men in every section of the country. Chancellor Kent exhausted the language of eulogy in extolling its merits. Governor Tazewell,

of Virginia, who had seldom concurred with Mr. Webster in his views upon public topics, thanked him cordially, and declared that he agreed with him throughout. During the same session Mr. Webster made frequent speeches upon various topics of interest, as they arose in the course of business, and wrote also a very able report on the Finances, on behalf of the Committee, of which he was a member. In 1835 he spoke at length upon the French Spoliation bill;—the power of removal from and appointments to office, insisting that the President could not rightfully remove from office without the consent of the Senate; and upon resolutions proposed by Mr. Benton, providing for the national defence, and especially upon the action the President had taken to secure their favorable consideration. He also drew up and presented a Protest against the action of the Senate, in adopting a motion to expunge from its records the resolutions by which, in 1834, it had expressed its disapprobation of the President's course in removing the deposits.

In November, 1836, Mr. Van Buren was elected President, to succeed General Jackson. During that winter, although the currency question and others, which had grown out of it, continued to occupy the attention of Congress and the country, and although Mr. Webster spoke frequently upon them as they came up for discussion, no great topic called for special effort. In February he accepted an invitation, from a very large number of merchants, professional men and others in the City of New-York, to attend a large public meeting. His speech, delivered on this occa-

sion in Niblo's Saloon, on the 15th of March, 1837, embraced a comprehensive view of all the measures by which General Jackson's administration had been distinguished. He spoke at length of the Tariff, Internal Improvements, &c., and called the attention of the country to the movements which were on foot for the annexation of Texas to the United States. He declared his opposition to that measure, mainly on account of his "entire unwillingness to do anything that should extend the Slavery of the African race, on this Continent, or add other Slave-holding States to this Union. But the main part of his speech related to the action of the Administration in regard to the financial condition of the country. After the adjournment of Congress, Mr. Webster made a rapid tour through the Western States, in the course of which he was greeted by the most cordial welcome on the part of the people, and addressed large meetings at Wheeling, Va., Madison, Ind., and other places.

President Van Buren came into office on the 4th of March, 1837. One of his first acts was to call an extra session of Congress, which met in September, to provide for the serious emergencies created by the almost simultaneous suspension of specie payments by the banks, throughout the country, in the month of May. At the meeting of Congress, the Independent Treasury System was brought forward by the Administration, which proposed to dispense altogether with the aid of banks, to provide a distinct set of officers to take charge of the public money, and to exact specie in payment of all public dues. Mr. Webster opposed the whole system, as imprac-

ticable and certain to prove in the highest degree injurious to the interests of the country. In a long and able speech at that session, he set forth his view of the duties of the General Government in regard to the Currency. The measure did not pass at the extra session.

At the next regular session, on the 27th of December, Mr. Calhoun offered a resolution against the interference of Congress with slavery in the District of Columbia, declaring that it would be a "direct and dangerous attack on the institutions of all the slaveholding States." To this Mr. Clay, on the 10th of January, 1838, offered a substitute, declaring that such interference would "be a violation of the faith implied in the cessions by the States of Virginia and Maryland, a just cause of alarm to the people of the slaveholding states, and have a direct and inevitable tendency to disturb and endanger the Union." Mr. Webster opposed both upon the ground that he could see nothing in the act of cession, nothing in the Constitution, and nothing in the history of this or any other transaction, implying any limitation upon the power of Congress to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over the ceded territory in all cases whatsoever.

On the 16th of January, a bill was introduced into the Senate by Mr. Wright, to establish the Independent Treasury system; which came up for its second reading on the 30th. Mr. Wright, in advocating the passage of the bill, had taken ground against the allegation that Congress had anything to do with providing a currency for the people. "Let the Government," said he, "attend to its own business,

and let the people attend to theirs. Let the Government take care that it secures a sound currency for its own use, and let it leave all the rest to the States and to the people." These "ominous sentences" were the key-note of the speech which Mr. Webster made in opposition to the bill on the next day. He denounced the sentiment which they expressed as utterly unbecoming a Republican Government, and opposed the bill as in the highest degree injurious to the public interest. On the 15th of February, Mr. Calhoun, who had, at the extra session, intimated his purpose to support the Sub-Treasury Bill, and had issued a letter to his constituents upon the subject during the recess, replied to Mr. Webster. This elicited from Mr. Webster, on the 12th of March, another speech on the same subject, much more elaborate and complete than the first. He discussed at length the relations of capital and labor in this country, the uses of the credit system, the progress of the country in agriculture, commerce and manufactures, and the extent to which this progress was due to the system of credit, and the absolute necessity to both the Government and the people of a sound Bank paper currency. He vindicated, by constitutional exposition and by recurrence to history, the right of the Government to use banks in the custody and transmission of its Funds, and pointed out the disastrous consequences which could not but result from the introduction of so different a system as that which the bill in question proposed to establish. He closed by referring to the speech of Mr. Calhoun, and by a very sharp examination of the course of that gentleman during

his public career. On this and other questions of public interest, Mr. Calhoun replied on the 22d of March, and spoke disparagingly of Mr. Webster's course during the last war with Great Britain. Mr. Webster rejoined at once, with force and effect.

In the Spring of 1839, Mr. Webster visited Europe, for the first and only time in his life,—making a hasty tour through England, Scotland and France. He was received with marked attention and with every mark of the most distinguished consideration. He attended several public festivals, and among them the first Triennial celebration of the Royal Agricultural Society at Oxford, on the 18th of July. He gave special attention during his tour to the condition of Agriculture, to the subject of Currency, and to the condition of the laboring classes; and the results of his study of these subjects are traceable in many of his subsequent speeches.

Previous to his departure, Mr. Webster had prepared a letter to the Whig National Convention which assembled during his absence, withdrawing his name as a candidate for the Presidency. General Harrison was nominated, and after a few weeks the whole country became intensely agitated with the contest between him and Mr. Van Buren. Mr. Webster returned before the election and took an active part in the contest. The derangement in the currency, the depression of labor which had resulted, the apprehensions entertained of the effect of the Sub-Treasury System upon the industry of the country, and other circumstances, laid the basis for a more exciting political canvass than the country has ever

witnessed before or since. At Saratoga, on the 19th of August, 1840, Mr. Webster addressed an immense meeting upon these subjects and other issues involved in the contest. On the 10th of September, he presided over a vast concourse of people assembled at Bunker Hill, and read a declaration of "Whig Principles and Purposes," which he had drawn up for the occasion. On the 28th of September, he made a speech from the steps of the Exchange in Wall-street, New-York, principally upon the financial issues involved. And on the 5th of October, he made a very eloquent address upon the general subject at Richmond, Virginia. All these speeches were marked by Mr. Webster's characteristics, strong reasoning, the utmost felicity of language, and the most imposing grandeur of manner and of style. With the result the country is familiar. General Harrison was elected President by an overwhelming popular majority, and came into office on the 4th of March, 1841.

MR. WEBSTER AS SECRETARY OF STATE.

The inauguration of General Harrison, in 1841, was the inauguration of a new era in the life of Mr. Webster. Mr. Clay, his great competitor in the political race, had distanced him in diplomatic honors. The treaty of Ghent had added the fame of the negotiator to that of the promising orator and statesman, which the colossal Kentuckian had been fortunate enough to secure in the first stages of his career. Mr. Webster had graduated in every other department of statesmanship; had appropriated the highest

rewards of resplendent success at the bar and in the forum; had won the just renown of patriotism, proved equal to the preservation of the Union at an imminent crisis; and, indeed, thoroughly matured his reputation before he proceeded to still higher exhibitions of his extraordinary powers. The remaining chapters of his biography form a perfect record of the most important events in the history of the national diplomacy down to the period of the statesman's death. In the formation of his Cabinet, General Harrison was prompted not only by his personal predilections, but by the obvious sense of a large section of the Whig party, to make Mr. Webster the nucleus. The Treasury Department was accordingly tendered to that gentleman, but he declined it, intimating at the same time his readiness to accept the Department of State. Notwithstanding the enormous responsibility devolving upon the former office, in consequence of the universal expectation that relief for the monetary distresses of the country was to emanate from that quarter, it was no consideration of indolence that induced Mr. Webster to prefer the latter. Our foreign relations were as sadly deranged as the finances. Mr. Van Buren's administration, so far from contributing to their adjustment, had, by pursuing the devious and hyper-cautious policy, which uniformly marked it, wrapped them in almost hopeless confusion. To a majority of the questions requiring immediate attention Great Britain was a party. Some of these difficulties were of a chronic nature; of others the symptoms were acute. The Northeastern Boundary had been the subject of con-

troversy for nearly half a century. The treaty of 1783 had left it involved in obscurity. A convention entered into in 1793 had determined a small portion of the line, viz.: that reaching from the Atlantic to the head-waters of the St. Croix, but the remainder was as unknown as the wilderness through which it passed. Another Convention, ten years later, prosecuted the subject further, by endeavoring to fix the whole boundary as far as the Rocky Mountains; but the acquisition of Louisiana rendering our Government doubtful about the extent of its rights at the Westward, the negotiation was broken off, until some explorations might be made. The matter stood thus until the Treaty of Ghent, when it was agreed to appoint a joint Commissioner to survey the line, and, in case of any disagreement, to select an arbitrator, whose decision should be final. The survey was made, and so was the report. There *was* disagreement, and while Mr. Clay was Secretary of State, in 1827, the question was submitted to the arbitrament of His Majesty the King of the Netherlands. That potentate reported in 1831; and his report was as unsatisfactory to the Cabinet of Washington as to that of St. James. The parties agreed to disagree; and we need not be surprised that, surrounded as it was with financial embarrassments and internal difficulties, which its own headlong policy had created, the Administration of General Jackson found no time to proceed with the calendar of unfinished business. A long and desultory correspondence between Mr. Forsyth, Secretary of State under Mr. Van Buren, and Mr. Fox, the British Envoy, only augmented

the trouble. Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary, was characteristically vexatious and difficult. Proposition after proposition emanated alternately from either Government, always involving the notion of tedious surveys, and no less tedious arbitrations; but the plan of neither suited the other, and they occupied the relations of two divergent orbs, to use Mr. Webster's own simile, which had to travel the whole circle before they could again meet. Such was the state of the whole subject when it descended to the Administration of General Harrison, bitterly aggravated, however, by the impatience and jealousy which had sprung up among the residents upon the debateable territory. Hostilities were daily expected; and the legislature of Maine had even gone so far as to provide for the arming and equipment of a large military force, disguised by the name of a "civil posse," to defend the supposed American frontier. No other than the most energetic action on the part of the Federal Government could prevent hostilities.

The Oregon frontier was also the subject of much anxiety, as the territory was rapidly filling with settlers. Much ill feeling prevailed at the frequent visits to which American vessels, on the coast of Africa, were subjected by British cruisers, under pretence of ascertaining their innocence of the Slave-trade. The case of Alexander McLeod, arising out of the seizure of the *Caroline*, in 1837, had, like every thing else of real importance, remained unhandled by Mr. Van Buren's Cabinet. In fact, a point in our external relations had been reached, when immediate negotiation was the alternative of war.

Our Minister to London entertained so lively a sense of the danger as to notify the Commander of our fleet in the Mediterranean of the probable approach of hostilities.

Mr. Webster found himself face to face with these pressing questions when he entered upon his duties. He grappled with them at once. The case of Alexander McLeod was laid before him, in an urgent letter from Mr. Fox, on the 12th of March, 1841. McLeod was about to stand a trial for his life before the State Courts of New-York, upon a charge of murder. The British Government avowed the seizure of the *Caroline* as an official act, thereby relieving any individual serving under its flag on that occasion of any criminal charge, and demanded the release of McLeod. Had he been executed, there is no doubt that war would have ensued. Mr. Webster, acknowledging the justice of the demand, but unable to interfere with the legal tribunals of an individual State, notified Mr. Fox of his desire to assist in the liberation of the prisoner, and Mr. Crittenden, then, as now, Attorney-General, was dispatched to New-York to assist in the defence. A verdict of acquittal solved the whole difficulty.

Early in the summer of 1841, Mr. Webster reopened the question of the Northeastern Boundary, by inviting the British Government to negotiate upon the new basis of a conventional line. The proposition was received at London at the moment when the Melbourne Ministry was about to relinquish office; and it met with no response until the following December, when Lord Aberdeen, Foreign Secretary in

the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel, acquainted Mr. Everett, our minister at St. James, with the intention of Her Majesty's Government to send a special envoy to the United States, in order to adjust all unsettled questions. Lord Ashburton, the agent selected, was recommended not only by his acquaintance with American character and affairs, but by his personal friendship for Mr. Webster, formed during the visit of the latter to England in 1839. Lord Ashburton arrived in Washington in April, 1842. Mr. Webster had already applied to the governments of Maine and Massachusetts to appoint commissioners who should participate in and sanction the negotiation; and the question, with all its collateral issues, was at once entered upon. The State papers which emanated from Mr. Webster in the course of this transaction, are among the most masterly productions of American intellect. They embrace the whole rationale of the subjects they successively treat, stated in terms so lucid, and with judgment so correct, as to form a new era in the history of International law. The treaty itself, undoubtedly accomplished all that could be accomplished at the time. Lord Ashburton was not prepared to enter upon the subject of the Oregon boundary; and that was the only question which the convention left unsettled. The boundary upon the Northeast was fixed on the basis of a conventional line, approved by the Commissioners of Maine and Massachusetts, the parties more immediately interested. The Right of Search was disfranchised; and, as a substitute, both nations engaged to sustain sufficient squadrons on the African coast

to repress the slave trade. An agreement for the reciprocal surrender of fugitives from justice was framed; and the minor questions, relating to the capture of the *Caroline* and the case of the *Creole*, were the subject of highly satisfactory correspondence, which has effectually prevented, and will always, it was imagined, discourage a recurrence of similar transactions. The labors of the negotiators were terminated on the 9th of August, 1842, and two days after the treaty was laid before the Senate. The Committee upon Foreign Relations, of which Hon. William C. Rives was chairman, reported it on the 15th, without amendment, and on the 20th, the Senate assented to the treaty, unamended, by a vote of Yeas 39, Nays 9. Among the affirmative votes we find the names of Messrs. J. C. Calhoun, Rufus Choate, John M. Clayton, John J. Crittenden, George Evans, William R. King, W. P. Mangum, William C. Preston, W. C. Rives, N. P. Tallmadge, Silas Wright, Levi Woodbury. In the negative, the only notable names were those of Messrs. Benton and Buchanan.

• The treaty of Washington, the ratifications of which were presently afterwards exchanged in London, classes with the most remarkable State papers of the time. The quintuple treaty between the five great powers for the suppression of the slave trade, which was signed in Dec. 1841, fell to the ground, in the presence of the better suggestions contained in the American document. The clause relative to the surrender of fugitives, has been reproduced in several conventions framed for that specific purpose, between

the various states of Europe. Disputes of tedious duration were laid to rest by it; others exciting an extravagant popular feeling, and promising to end in an ill-timed resort to arms, were for ever quieted. It is to be regretted that several points, which Mr. Webster deemed satisfactorily adjusted by the correspondence between himself and Lord Ashburton, had not been more definitely secured by articles in the treaty. The seizure of the *Caroline*, and the treatment of the crew of the *Creole*, both involved questions of international right, in which the honor of our flag was deeply interested. Lord Ashburton, it is true, conceded the irregularity of those acts; and so long as the correspondence is remembered, it may prevent any repetition. But there would have been a stronger assurance, if the treaty itself had embodied the understanding. It was of course the policy of Lord Palmerston and the English opposition, to denounce the treaty, as sacrificing the interests of Great Britain. The subject led to an animated debate in the House of Commons, and the Ministry sustained a severe shock in the encounter. But the Whigs failed to prevent its ratification. At home and abroad, Mr. Webster was at once recognized as one of the foremost diplomatists of the day. His reputation became a European one; and if the expression of satisfaction throughout this country was less vivacious than might have been anticipated, the fact must be accounted for by the unpopularity of the administration with which he was connected; Gen. Harrison having died, and been succeeded by John Tyler within a month after his inauguration.

While the negotiations with Lord Ashburton were pending, other external questions divided the attention of the Secretary of State. Our relations with Mexico were precarious. While on the one hand our Government was pressing the liberation of several American citizens, who had attended the unfortunate Texan expedition against Santa Fé, the Government of Mexico appealed to that of Washington, to repress the southern emigration to Texas, which swelled the armies of that Republic to an extent, which threatened not only to make the conquest impossible for the largest force Mexico could raise, but to expose that confederation to invasion and dissolution. The correspondence of Mr. Webster with Gen. Waddy Thompson, then Envoy at the city of Mexico, and with Sig. De Bocanegra, the Mexican Foreign Secretary, embraces a clear and eloquent statement of the rights and duties of the two nations under such circumstances. The Mexican Minister was less respectful in the tone of his communications than was fitting the dignity of our Government, and Mr. Webster closed the correspondence with a reiterated averment of our entire neutrality, and an expression of unwillingness to have any further intercourse upon the subject. At the same time, the case of the Spanish brig *Amistad* remained unsettled on the files of the Department, where it had been left by the previous administration. The vessel had been found by one of our home squadron, lying close to the American coast, and in the possession of a band of negroes, who had murdered the officers, and were too unskilful to manage the ship. It was brought

into port and a claim for salvage stated against it. While the matter was in this posture, the Chevalier d'Argaiz, the Spanish Minister, addressed the Secretary of State, protesting against the reference of the case to the Courts, when, as he maintained, it should be treated by the Executive, as relating directly to treaty obligations. This letter led to prolonged correspondence, in which Mr. Webster defended the course pursued by his government so successfully as to silence, if not satisfy, the Spanish Envoy. And as a portion of the diplomatic history of the period, we must not omit mention of the admirable instructions addressed to Mr. Caleb Cushing, when that gentleman was about to embark on the delicate mission of opening relations with China; nor the correspondence with the Portuguese Envoy, upon the subject of duties upon foreign wines. In both of these papers, relatively unimportant as they undoubtedly are, the extensive information, and comprehensive views of the statesman, were brought into vivid relief.

As completing the history of this era of American politics, we are obliged to refer to two magnificent displays of his rhetorical powers, which Mr. Webster, the orator, felt called upon to make on behalf of Mr. Webster, the statesman. Returning, after the arduous duties of the summer, to enjoy a few weeks of relaxation at Marshfield, he was obliged to listen to a pressing invitation from his Boston admirers, that he should address them publicly on the foreign and domestic policy of the country. The discourse was delivered to a crowded audience, in Fa-

neuil Hall, on the 22d of September, 1842. It is needless to say, that it traversed the whole ground with masterly skill, distinctness, and compactness of expression, and that the recent negotiations received that luminous exposition and earnest vindication, which was less needed perhaps in Massachusetts than elsewhere, where the subject was less familiarly understood. Partisan bitterness, however, denied the question any rest from controversy. It was agitated among other electioneering elements in the canvass of 1844, and in 1846, when in the Senate, Mr. Webster found his political opponents unsparing of their objections against the Treaty. In April, of that year, he took occasion to address the Senate in justification of that measure. Mr. Charles Jared Ingersoll, a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania, had made the treaty, and the American negotiator, the topic of virulent diatribes before that body, never allowing his arguments to fall short where a ready calumny was at hand to piece them out. Messrs. Dix and Dickinson, the Senators from New-York, also attacked the ex-Secretary; the latter in an elaborate speech, to which, when published, a re-hash of Mr. Ingersoll's godless inventions was found to be appended. The reply of Mr. Webster will always rank among the most splendid and characteristic productions of his mind. Reviewing the history of the difficulties adjusted by the treaty, he scored the Democratic party thoroughly for the remissness, which had left them for the administration of Mr. Tyler to settle; and having amply vindicated that settlement beyond the possibility of further ca-

vil, he turned upon his assailants, and exhausted upon them the stores of his indignant elocution. Mr. Ingersoll received the full weight of the charge. Never was such a scathing torrent of contempt, ridicule, sarcasm, and vituperation, poured out upon an individual head. Clearing away with a rapid hand the sheltering falsehoods beneath which the Pennsylvanian had concealed himself, the orator held him up naked to the world, and tortured him with all the sharp weapons which the armories of rhetoric supply to a just indignation. Mr. Ingersoll, who had been more or less in public life, for the forty preceding years, disappeared after this castigation. He has since confined himself to domestic and professional associations.

But Mr. Webster's connection with the Cabinet of Mr. Tyler was never redeemed from censure by the success of his negotiations. Mr. Tyler had been in office but a short time when it began to be apparent that his administration would not be conducted in a manner to command the undivided support of the party which had raised him to power. While in the Senate, during the great controversy between State Rights and the Federal Government, he had espoused the cause of Mr. Calhoun, and had acted in general harmony with his views. His course then had prevented his enjoying the full confidence of the Whigs, at a later day; and his accession to the Presidency soon put his fidelity to the test. Mr. Clay took an early opportunity to introduce a bill for the Charter of a National Bank. A very large portion of the Whig party, during the canvass, had strenu-

ously resisted the endeavor to present the Bank as a measure to which the party should be considered pledged. The utter ruin which had overtaken the Old Bank of the United States, and the conviction that, during the latter years of its existence, it had, by mismanagement and corrupt practices, richly deserved the universal odium with which its memory was covered, had led them to foresee the unpopularity which any attempt to create a new one would inevitably incur. But, in spite of this distrust, the overwhelming parliamentary and party strength of Mr. Clay enabled him to carry the bill triumphantly through Congress, and it was presented to President Tyler for his signature. This was withheld, and the bill was vetoed. Mr. Clay at once denounced the President to the indignation of his party, and a whirlwind of obloquy and detestation was at once aroused, before which a much stronger spirit than President Tyler's would have been forced to bend. Mr. Webster, who was not free from suspicion that personal ambition on the part of Mr. Clay had quite as much to do with this crusade as regard for the public good, with more courage than success, endeavored to breast the storm. He was earnest and unremitting in his efforts to bring the Whigs into a more tolerant and compliant mood. At a gathering of the leading Whigs of Congress, had at his own house, he strongly urged upon them the folly of throwing away all the results of the great popular victory they had gained, because they had been disappointed in a single measure, and that, too, one of questionable necessity and expediency. His efforts were unavailing. The thunder of

Mr. Clay's denunciations drowned his tones of remonstrance—the whole Whig sentiment of the country swayed respondent to his tempestuous wrath. Mr. Webster's colleagues in the Cabinet indignantly tendered their resignations, hurling at the President, as they left, the most dishonoring charges of party faithlessness and personal falsehood.

Strong in the conviction of the rectitude of his own purposes, unwilling to yield to what he deemed a transient ebullition of popular feeling, and profoundly penetrated by the importance of pending negotiations with foreign powers, Mr. Webster determined, against the most resolute entreaties of his political friends, to retain his seat, and he did so retain it for about two years. For this he was severely censured by the great body of the Whig party, and especially by the adherents of Mr. Clay, who were not over charitable in the construction they put upon his motives, or in the epithets they applied to his conduct. During his continuance in office, a State Convention of the Whigs of Massachusetts assembled in Boston, to nominate candidates for Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, at the State election. Hon. Abbot Lawrence presided over its deliberations, and a series of resolutions were adopted, expressing in strong terms disapprobation of the course of Mr. Tyler, and declaring, on behalf of the Whigs of Massachusetts, a "*full and final separation* from the President of the United States." Not long afterwards, Mr. Webster being on a visit to Boston, was tendered by the Whigs—many of whom had been prominent in the Convention—the compli-

ment of a public dinner. He declined the dinner, but expressed a willingness to meet his fellow-citizens at Faneuil Hall. The meeting was appointed for Sept. 30, and was attended by an immense concourse of the people of Boston. Hon. Jonathan Chapman, Mayor of the city, presided; and, upon presenting Mr. Webster to the assembly, addressed him with eloquent compliments for his public services, but with special allusion to what he styled the "pointed meaning of the occasion." He thanked him for the honorable attitude in which, "so far as *his* department was concerned, he had placed his country before the world. We are sure," said he, "whatever may befall the country, that you will be ready to sacrifice everything for her good, save *honor*, and on that point, amidst the perplexities of these perplexing times, we shall be at ease; for we know that he who has so nobly maintained his country's honor, may safely be intrusted with his own."

Mr. Webster opened his reply with one of those exquisitely beautiful sentences which are scattered so profusely throughout his speeches. "I know not how it is, Mr. Mayor," said he, "but there is something in the echoes of these walls, or in this sea of upturned faces which I behold before me, or in the genius that always hovers over this place, fanning ardent and patriotic feeling by every motion of its wings—I know not how it is, but there is something that excites me strangely, deeply, before I even begin to speak." Recurring then to the history of his life, to his labors in their midst, and to his public services in the various positions he had been called

to fill ; after a clear, condensed statement of the diplomatic labors in which he had been engaged, he referred directly to the remark of the Mayor, that he might be safely intrusted to take care of his own honor and reputation. "I am," said he, "exactly of his opinion. I am quite of opinion that, on a question touching my own honor and character, as I am to bear the consequences of the decision, I had a great deal better be trusted to make it. No man feels more highly the advantage of the advice of friends than I do ; but on a question so delicate and important as that, I like to choose myself the friends who are to give me advice ; and upon this subject, gentlemen, I shall leave you as enlightened as I found you." With this rather unpromising preface, he proceeded to remark upon the "outpouring of wrath" to which he had been subjected for remaining in the President's Cabinet. He was "a little hard to coax, but as to being driven that was out of the question." He had chosen to trust to his own judgment, and thinking he was at a post where he was in the service of the country and could do it good, he had staid there. Again apologizing for entering upon topics on which his opinions might be different from those of his audience, he cited the resolutions passed "by the most respectable Convention of Whig delegates," which had met in Boston a few days before. He noticed among them a declaration, made on behalf of the Whigs of the State, a "full and final separation from the President." Whigs had a right to speak their individual sentiments everywhere ; but whether they might assume to speak for others

on a point on which those others had given them no authority, is another question. "I am a Whig," said he—"I have always been a Whig, and I always will be one; and if there are any who would turn me out of the pale of that communion, let them see who will get out first. I am ready to submit to all decisions of Whig conventions on subjects on which they are authorized to make decisions. But it is quite another question, whether a set of gentlemen, however respectable they may be as individuals, shall have the power to bind me on matters which I have not agreed to submit to their decision." He went on to say that three years of the President's term of office still remained; that great public interests required his attention; and asked whether all his measures upon these subjects, however useful they might be, were to be opposed by the Whig party of Massachusetts, right or wrong. There were a great many Massachusetts Whigs also in office—Collectors, District Attorneys, Postmasters, Marshals. What was to become of them in this separation? Mr. Everett, our Minister in England, was *he* expected to come home on this separation, and yield his place to somebody else? "And in regard to the individual who addresses you—what do his brother Whigs mean to do with him? Where do they mean to place me? Generally, when a divorce takes place, the parties divide their children. I am anxious to know where, in the case of this divorce, *I* shall fall." Mr. Webster said he had alluded to this matter because he could not fail to see that the resolution had an intentional or an unintentional bearing on his position.

It meant that if he should choose to remain in the President's councils he must cease to be a Massachusetts Whig. "And I am quite ready," said he, "to put that question to the people of Massachusetts." He proceeded to say that there was too general a disposition to postpone all attempts to do good to the country to some future day. Many Whigs thought they saw a prospect of having more power than they then had. But there was a Whig majority in Congress, and the substantial fruits of the great victory of 1840 could, with moderate and prudent councils, still be secured. But nothing but cordial and fraternal union could save the party from renewed prostration.

Mr. Webster's speech on this occasion was one of great power, and it produced an effect upon the sentiment of the country. But it could not turn back the tide of indignant public feeling which had been turned at the outset, by the bold impetuosity of Mr. Clay and the seconding efforts of the retiring Secretaries, against the President. He gradually took ground against the party which had driven him out, and, after an imbecile endeavor to purchase a renomination from the party to which he had deserted, became its open ally and subservient tool. Mr. Webster resigned office in 1843, and remained in private life during the remainder of the Administration. He was succeeded by Mr. Calhoun, who was elected by the President for the special purpose of carrying forward the Annexation of Texas, a measure which he had been led to espouse with great earnestness, though the steps towards its accomplishment were as

yet concealed from the knowledge of the country. Mr. Webster, on leaving office, endeavored to arouse public attention to the dangers that were impending from this quarter ; but his efforts were not attended with marked success. It was only upon the eve of another Presidential contest that the question assumed its just proportions in the public eye.

During his retirement from office much of Mr. Webster's attention was engaged in professional pursuits, and the year 1844 was marked by several brilliant exhibitions of his popular and forensic oratory. Two arguments, the one before the Supreme Court of the United States, and the other before that of Massachusetts, are in his very happiest vein. The first was delivered in February, in the case of F. F. Vidal and others, *vs.* the Executors of the will of Stephen Girard,—a case in which property to the value of millions was involved. The main ground taken by Mr. Webster, on behalf of the heirs, against the validity of the will, was that the College at Philadelphia, endowed by the will, was not a charity, because established on Atheistical principles, and therefore not entitled to the protection of the laws. This proposition was supported with all the aids of learning and ingenuity ; and on American soil no more eloquent vindication of religion and its ministers has ever been uttered. The speech, in a pamphlet form, was circulated extensively among the religious world. It remains among the host of evidences he has left us, of the wide scope and infinite diversity of his talents, and the respect he always entertained for the institutions of religion. The argument at Boston,

in the case of the *Providence Railroad Company against the City of Boston*, is, from its nature, a strictly legal effort, and therefore requires no especial notice here. In June, of 1844, the anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill and the completion of the monument were celebrated with much éclat at Boston. The speech of Mr. Webster, who had baptized the first stone of the column with a stream of eloquence that shall remain classic while the monument and the language endure, was exceedingly appropriate, and though lacking the fire and imaginative splendor of his earlier efforts, abounds with passages of remarkable vigor and beauty.

The Presidential canvass of 1844, opened by the nomination of Mr. Clay, by acclamation, in the Whig Convention at Baltimore. Mr. Webster, being in that city at the time, made a speech indicating his earnest desire for the triumph of the Whig party and its principles. Mr. Van Buren, in a long letter written just upon the eve of the Democratic Convention, had taken ground decidedly against the annexation of Texas. For this offence, among others, he had been set aside as a candidate, and Mr. Polk was nominated for the Presidency. Mr. Clay had also taken ground against annexation; and the canvass was conducted, to a very great extent, in all sections of the country, upon this issue. Mr. Webster made several public addresses upon the subject. At Albany, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, he spoke to large assemblies of people, though in all cases he gave attention mainly to questions relating to the commercial, financial and industrial interests of the country. There is abundant

reason to believe that if Mr. Clay had been content with his first declaration of opinion upon the subject of annexation, he would have been elected. Subsequent explanations, made to remove anticipated objections to his position in Alabama, and other Southern States, deprived him, to a great extent, of the benefit which that position gave him at the North.

At the opening of the Congress of 1845, Mr. Webster resumed his seat in the Senate, having been chosen to succeed Mr. Choate. He found under discussion some of the gravest questions that had ever agitated the country. The Oregon Boundary, and the results of Texan Annexation, were urgent; and popular feeling had been worked up to an extraordinary pitch of excitement about both. The Democratic Platform had declared in favor of ultra measures. It only remained for the Whigs, in Senate and House, to play the moderate *rôle* of a minority, and as far as possible restrain the violence that threatened to bring on our heads two wars, for either of which we were totally unprepared, at the same hapless moment. The Tariff bill of 1842 was likewise in imminent danger; and in every point of view, the posture of the party in relation to the conduct of both the external and internal policy of the Government, was distressing and difficult. Mr. Webster was of course found in the van of the minority. Upon the Oregon question, he maintained the line of adjustment to which the Administration and its supporters were finally obliged to descend. Having opposed the Annexation resolutions, he was of course opposed to the precipitate measures by which we were plunged into the war with

Mexico. And on the Tariff bill, he occupied the position he had always occupied, by defending the Whig policy to the very last. Of the eminently judicious policy of the Whigs with regard to the prosecution of the war, Mr. Webster deserves the credit. While protesting against the measure in its origin and progress, they patriotically sustained the Administration with the most liberal supplies, and facilitated every approach to the only term then attainable, an honorable and remunerative peace.

The settlement of the Oregon Boundary dispute, which had existed for many years, was effected during the first year of Mr. Polk's administration, by an amicable division of the Territory to which both England and the United States laid claim. A bill was promptly introduced and passed the House of Representatives to organize a Government for the Territory thus acquired. When it reached the Senate, it was amended, by making the Missouri Compromise a part of it—excluding Slavery above, and admitting it below, the parallel of $36^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude. This amendment was disagreed to in the House; and when the bill came back, a long discussion was had upon a motion that the Senate should recede. On the 12th of August, 1848, Mr. Webster spoke in favor of the motion, insisting upon the right of Congress to exclude Slavery from this Territory, upon the expediency of exercising that right, upon the groundlessness of the complaint on the part of the South that their property was excluded, and against any further extension of slave territory. Upon the question of extending Southern property, he said that the whole

complaint was simply this: "The Southern States have peculiar laws, and by those laws there is property in slaves. This is purely local. The real meaning, then, of Southern gentlemen, in making this complaint, is, that they cannot go into the Territories of the United States carrying with them their own peculiar local law—a law which creates property in persons. This demand I, for one, shall resist." He closed his remarks by laying down three propositions:

First. That when this Constitution was adopted, nobody looked for any new acquisition of territory to be formed into slaveholding States.

Second. That the principles of the Constitution prohibited, and were intended to prohibit, and should be construed to prohibit, all interference of the General Government with Slavery, as it existed, and as it still exists, in the States. And

Third. Looking to the operation of these new acquisitions, which have in this great degree had the effect of strengthening that interest in the South by the addition of *five* States, I feel that there is nothing unjust, nothing of which any honest man can complain, if he is intelligent; I feel that there is nothing with which the civilized world, if they take notice of so humble a person as myself, will reproach me when I say, as I said the other day, that I have made up my mind for one, that under no circumstances will I consent to the further extension of the area of Slavery in the United States, or to the further increase of Slave representation in the House of Representatives.

The Senate finally receded from its amendment, and the bill passed with a clause for ever excluding

Slavery from the Territory—in which form it received the signature of the President.

In the Spring of 1847, Mr. Webster visited the Southern States, passing rapidly through Virginia and North Carolina to South Carolina. At Charleston, he was honored by a complimentary dinner from the New England Society of that city, and similar hospitalities were paid him at Columbia, Augusta, and Savannah. He designed going to New Orleans, but ill health compelled him to return.

The Mexican war meantime had been prosecuted, by the skill and valor of the American arms, to a triumphant close. The capital and all the principal posts of the country were in our possession, and a treaty had been concluded by which Mexico ceded to us immense portions of her territory, comprising all of New Mexico and a large part of California. Mr. Webster, on the 22d of March, 1848, opposed the treaty, on the ground that it brought with it large accessions of territory which we did not need, which would only add new Slave States to the Union, which would bring in new States of comparatively small population, and thus vastly augment the power of the Senate over that of the House of Representatives, and thus destroy the just relation between the two, and prove in every way injurious to the country. "I think," said he, "I see a course adopted which is likely to turn the Constitution of the land into a deformed monster, into a curse rather than a blessing; in fact, a frame of an unequal Government, not founded on popular representation, not founded on equality, but on the grossest inequality; and I think that

this process will go on, or that there is *danger* that it will go on, until this Union shall fall to pieces. I resist it, to-day and always. Whoever falters or whoever flies, I continue the contest!" The treaty was ratified. New Mexico and California became parts of the United States; and the great question thence arising, to be submitted to the issues of a Presidential canvass, related to the nature of the territorial government under which they should be organized. The House insisted on the exclusion of slavery. The Senate resisted it; and between the two the whole question was left unsettled, and military power alone kept the territories from a state of anarchy.

The Democratic National Convention nominated General Cass for the Presidency, greatly to the disgust of the friends of Mr. Van Buren. The Whig Convention met at Philadelphia, and nominated General Taylor. Mr. Webster declined to be a candidate for the Vice Presidency, declaring himself a candidate for the first office, and his purpose to remain so until the representatives of the Whig party should decide otherwise. He was dissatisfied with the nomination of General Taylor, partly because he was opposed to making Presidents of military men, and partly because he believed that the condition of the country required the selection of a Northern man, known to be true in resisting the steady aggressions of Slavery. The result led him to despair of ever seeing the North *united*; and when the profess- edly exclusive friends of freedom in the territories, selected Mr. Van Buren as their candidate and re-

presentative, he was inclined to abandon all further hope of making any successful stand against the domination of the Slave-holding States. Falling back, therefore, upon the other issues which had divided the two political parties, he gave his support to the Whig candidate; taking care to say that it was not because he believed him to be the most fit and proper person for that position, but because he believed his election would be far better for the country than that of General Cass. General Taylor was elected.

Meantime the people of California, getting no Government from Congress, made one for themselves. They met in State Convention, and formed a Constitution, in which slavery was prohibited. This Constitution was accepted by the people at an election held for the purpose. President Taylor came into office on the 4th of March, 1849. Owing to a misunderstanding between them, growing out of accidental circumstances, which involved blame upon neither side, there were no confidential relations between the President and Mr. Webster. In the House of Representatives the Anti-Slavery proviso was insisted on as an essential feature of any Government for the territories that might be passed. This position was sustained by resolutions in all the non-Slaveholding States, by large public meetings and by Northern sentiment generally. The South felt highly indignant at these attempts to exclude Slavery from the new territories. A meeting of a majority of the members of Congress from the Slaveholding States was held at the Capital, at one of which Mr. Calhoun was appointed to draw up an address of the

Southern delegates to their constituents. The address thus prepared was afterwards adopted, and received the signature of forty-eight members of Congress from Southern States. These movements led to a very considerable excitement throughout the country, though neither the state of public feeling, nor the movements of any portion of the people, were as hostile or menacing to the peace of the country as had been witnessed on previous occasions of our history. Mr. Clay had presented a series of propositions, five in number, which were designed to be embodied in a single act, and to constitute one measure for compromising and adjusting the difficulty. President Taylor was understood to be in favor of acting upon each separately, and on its merits, doing whatever justice should dictate, and trusting to the attachment of the people, and the vigor of the powers with which the Constitution clothes the Government, to prevent any serious results. He was in favor of admitting California with the Constitution which the people had framed, and of leaving the territories to settle the question of admitting or excluding slavery for themselves. Deputations of Southern members of Congress waited upon him, with earnest remonstrances and equally earnest menaces; but neither shook his convictions or disturbed his purposes. The compromise measure of Mr. Clay failed to command the assent of Congress. And on the 7th of March, Mr. Webster made an extended and impressive speech upon the whole subject, intended to present a basis upon which all sections could consent to stand, and by which all future collisions might be

avoided. He proposed, as practical measures, nearly the plan of the President, namely: the admission of California, and the organization of Territorial Governments for New Mexico and Utah, without any excluding clause—urging that such a clause would, in this case, be superfluous. But he indicated a willingness to purchase the claim of Texas to a portion of New Mexico, which the President proposed to submit to the adjudication of the Supreme Court, and made sundry declarations of his own personal sentiments, indicating a strong disposition to make all possible concessions to Southern demands, for the sake of preserving the peace and stability of the Union. His speech on this occasion was exceedingly able, and awakened a degree of public interest fully equal to that of any of his previous efforts. Connected, to some extent, with these measures, was a bill amending the law of 1793 for the recovery of fugitive slaves, so as to make it more effectual. It was originally introduced by Mr. Mason, of Virginia, and received Mr. Webster's support, although he had prepared and designed to offer an amendment, securing to persons claimed as fugitives the benefit of a trial by jury, to test the question whether they owed service to their claimants.

We have good reason for believing that Mr. Webster at this time had been disabused of erroneous impressions that had led, as noticed above, to a partial estrangement between himself and the President; and that he had come to regard Gen. Taylor as the man best fitted by position, and by his views, to carry the country safely through the crisis. This, how-

ever, belongs to the secret history of those important events, and the time for writing that,—even if we were competent and possessed of the requisite material,—has not yet come. It is sufficient to say that if Gen. Taylor had lived, Mr. Webster would have been the acknowledged leader of the Administration in the Senate, and that affairs would undoubtedly have taken a different course. At this juncture, however, Gen. Taylor died, and Mr. Fillmore, then Vice-President, succeeded to the office. Mr. Webster was at once called by him, and by the voice of the country, to the post which he occupied at the time of his decease. The office was no longer oppressed with those burdens of unfinished business, which had encumbered it at the end of Mr. Van Buren's term. But it had nevertheless its share of peculiar responsibilities. The administration of Mr. Fillmore was required to enforce with the whole weight of its exalted influence the conditions of the Compromise, which were speedily enacted into laws. Some of those conditions offended the moral feelings and prejudices of one section of the Union: and the other pressed all the more eagerly for their relentless fulfilment. To no portions of the country were the Compromise measures more distasteful than to New England, and to Mr. Webster's own State. The Secretary, nevertheless, did not hesitate to lend the whole strength of his popularity and of his intellectual resources to reconcile the reluctant North. His zeal, perhaps, transcended the suggestions of personal and political expediency. Some of it was positively due to the malignant violence and keenness with

which his course had been hailed by Abolitionists and ultra Free-Soilers; but those who knew Mr. Webster most intimately, bear witness that the principal motive of his course from first to last was an unwavering conviction that the duration of the Union and the sanctity of the Constitution, depended upon entire acquiescence in those pacificatory conventions. The effect upon the state of feeling at the North was perhaps fortunate for the country; but it cannot be doubted that a large number of personal friends and veteran supporters of the statesman were thenceforward obliged to temper their admiration with some portion of regret.

It was only a few weeks after Mr. Webster's accession to the Secretaryship of State, that the letter of Chevalier Hulseman, in relation to an alleged interference of the American government in the internal affairs of Austria, was addressed to the Department. This document, famous only for the response it provoked, contained a recital of complaints preferred by the Imperial Court, in consequence of Mr. Dudley Mann's mission of observation to Austria and Hungary, and the reports made by that agent, in which language disrespectful to the Governments of Russia and Austria, was alleged to have been used; and the Austrian Chargé felt impelled to enter a protest against what his principals chose to regard as an act of impertinent intervention. The reply of Mr. Webster, which was withheld for some time as if to aggravate the contemptuous rejoinder by a preface of contemptuous silence, is fresh in every recollection. Its lofty and dignified tone, a tone indeed of haughty

condescension ; the faithful and unanswerable refutation it offered to some of Mr. Hulseman's allegations, and the air with which controversy about others was declined ; the rebuke administered to the Austrian Government for its despotic barbarity ; the bold and unmistakable statement of the American policy toward a people ridding itself of such a yoke as that imposed upon the Hungarians ; these traits, and the animated eloquence with which they were framed, constitute the note to the Austrian Chargé one of the finest papers in the archives of diplomacy. It will remain as a model for diplomatic controversy hereafter, where republican practice is called in question, and republican frankness is demanded to justify it. It will be regarded as the authority upon all matters of external policy. And scholars and general readers will recur to it as a pattern of literary elegance and intellectual brilliancy.

In May, 1851, Mr. Webster accompanying the President and his colleagues in the Cabinet, visited the State of New-York, on the occasion of celebrating the completion of the New-York and Erie Railroad. On reaching Dunkirk, he was detained there by the illness of his son, and compelled to separate from the rest of the party. At Buffalo he was complimented by a public dinner, at which he made an extended and admirable speech, mainly upon the rapid growth of that section of the State, with allusions to some of the leading topics that had recently engaged public attention. The next day, on the 22d, he addressed the people of Buffalo more directly upon the subjects which were then prominent in

the public mind, vindicating the policy of the Administration upon all points, and defending his own course. He was greeted also by large public gatherings of people at Rochester, Albany, and other points along the route, at all of which he made addresses more or less extended.

Very soon after his return to Washington, Mr. Webster's attention was called to our relations with Spain, in consequence of the expeditions against Cuba, to which General Lopez and a large number of American citizens fell victims. His offices, less promptly rendered than an impatient public sentiment demanded, procured the release of a large number of prisoners who had been carried to Spain, and subsequently obtained the discharge of Mr. John S. Thrasher, whose dubious citizenship evoked from the Secretary an able discussion of the law of domicil. The rough treatment of the Spanish Consul at New Orleans by the populace, inflamed by the cruelties practised upon the soldiers of the expedition by the Spanish authorities of Cuba, was likewise the subject of correspondence and reparation. The last year of Mr. Webster's life was occupied with several diplomatic questions of the highest importance, but which he was prevented from completing by the hand of death. These were the revival of the Clayton and Bulwer Treaty in relation to Central American affairs; the Tehuantepec Treaty; the question of the right of fishery; and that of the ownership of the Lobos Islands. As these are contemporary matters, and opinions about them still variable, because not founded upon the most ample supplies of infor-

mation, and as their consummation will now pass into other hands, we do not think proper to admit them into our estimate of the Statesman. We know nothing of the issue that might have been given to any of them had the illustrious diplomatist survived. It is not worth while, with the lights before us, to say any thing more than that the action of Mr. Webster was undoubtedly the result of entire devotion to what he believed to be the truest interests of the country, and that whatever room there may be to question the soundness of his conclusions, there is no reason to impeach his sincerity and integrity.

In tracing this outline of the biography of a man who fills in American history a place equal in honor and dignity, though differing in kind, with those occupied by Pitt, Fox, and Burke, in the history of England, we have been obliged to pass by many of those occasions when he came in more immediate contact with the people. In the published collection of his works, there are various orations, addresses, and letters, which excited the highest applause at the time of their publication, and remain as witnesses of the diversified qualities and resources of his mind. We might mention among these his eulogistic tributes to General Jackson and Mr. Calhoun; his various addresses to his friends in Boston and neighbors at Marshfield; his oration at the New Hampshire festival; his capital paper read last winter before the New-York Historical Society, and published in the *Daily Times*; his letter to Hon. Isaac Hill, and to our Minister at Constantinople, in relation to the release of the Hungarian refugees. No one of these

but illustrates some strong, masculine, but exquisitely sculptured feature of his Titanic intellect; and forms one of the many links by which he attracted to himself, not only the popular admiration, but the admiration, the esteem, the enthusiastic devotion of all educated men.

It would however be unjust to his memory to pass unnoticed his opinions and action in regard to the great event by which in future time the current year will be distinguished,—the visit of the Hungarian Kossuth to the United States. Mr. Webster had early evinced the warm interest which he felt in the welfare of that noble martyr to the cause of Constitutional Liberty in Hungary, by his letter of instructions to Hon. George P. Marsh, our Minister at Constantinople, directing him to use all the influence of his official position to prevent his surrender to the Austrian Government, and to permit his retirement to the United States. Governor Kossuth reached New-York on the 6th of December, 1851, and at once entered upon that great pilgrimage of romance, and of love to the crushed hopes and liberties of his native land, which stands without parallel in the history of the world. “For the first time,” says the most eloquent American living, in speaking of his appeals to the pity of the people of this Republic,—“for the first time since the transcendent genius of Demosthenes strove with the downward age of Greece; or since the Prophets of Israel announced,—each tone of the hymn grander, sadder than before,—the successive footfalls of the approaching Assyrian, beneath whose spear the Law should cease and the vision be seen no

more; our ears, our hearts, have drank the sweetest, most mournful, most awful of the tones which man may ever utter, or may ever hear,—the eloquence of an Expiring Nation. When shall we be quite certain again, that the lyre of Orpheus did not kindle savage natures to a transient discourse of reason; did not suspend the labours and charm the pains of the damned; did not lay the guardian of the grave asleep, and bring back Eurydice from the region beyond the river, to the warm, upper air?" At the invitation of Congress, Kossuth visited Washington, and on the 7th of January, partook of a public banquet tendered to him by a large number of the members of both Houses. Mr. Webster was present on this occasion, and made a speech, in which, although restrained by the proprieties of his position, from making any allusion to the sentiments or intended action of the Government, he did not hesitate to declare his entire sympathy with the attempt of Hungary to achieve her independence, and his opinion that she was entitled, by her population, by her institutions, and by the valor of her people, to an independent national existence. He also referred to the speech which he made in the Senate of the United States, in 1824, upon the principles involved in the Greek revolution; and declared that he adhered to them in every respect, and was quite ready to apply them to whatever case might be presented. The citations we have made, in a previous portion of this paper, from that speech, supersede the necessity of dwelling further upon the specific purport of this declaration. In letters written, in reply to various invitations to attend public

meetings upon the subject, he expressed similar views with equal emphasis.

Mr. Webster has achieved high distinction in three apparently incompatible walks of life—walks that are incompatible to all but men of superior genius. As a lawyer, he has for very many years held the foremost rank. Surpassed by many in legal learning, by some in logical power, and by a few in the eloquence of his appeals to the jury, in the combination of all these great faculties, he stands unrivalled. As a statesman, in the most comprehensive meaning of that large word, no American, except Alexander Hamilton, can maintain a comparison with him. Mr. Calhoun had a more acute and metaphysical mind; Mr. Clay, with a more electric nature, had far greater sagacity in reading public sentiment, and in gaining command of the springs of popular attachment; and each of those great men held in more complete control the opinions and conduct of large masses of their countrymen. But in that large, liberal comprehensiveness which saw all around and all through every subject—which studied and judged every thing in all its relations, and in that high-toned, unbending, uncompromising dignity of thought, of language and of manner, with which he was always clothed, and which gave infinite impressiveness to every thing he did or said—neither of them, nor any other American, living or dead, was equal to him. His political career has been marked by greater consistency of principle than that of most of his distinguished cotemporaries, and by quite as close adherence to a single system of measures as is compatible

with wisdom in a science which is, in fact, only a science of expedients. Upon the question of the Tariff, he changed his policy—but only to meet changes in the business relations and interests of the section of the country for which he acted. At a still later day, during the struggles of 1850, for sectional supremacy, Mr. Webster held a different position from that which he occupied with such distinction during the similar convulsions of 1833. But the principles which he maintained on both these occasions were essentially the same: it was only upon the practical measures in which they were to be embodied, that he had changed. And, always—in all these cases and in all the acts of his life, in every thing he ever did or said, from the earliest day of his public service down to the latest syllable of his recorded time,—he lived, and moved, and had his being, under the domination of an ever-present love of Country, which knew no change, and left no act or word of his life unmarked by its presence and its power. A more thorough American never trod the continent than Daniel Webster. He loved his country; he bowed before the wisdom and holy patriotism of its founders and its fathers; he revered the Constitution which gave it national being and position in the view of the world; and he devoted all the energies of his life to its defence against whatever threatened, from any quarter, to weaken its foundations or impair its strength. For this high service, rendered with such matchless power, and fruitful of influences which will make themselves felt at every period of our future

history, he merits and will receive the profoundest gratitude of every heart.

But, besides the reputation which he won as a lawyer and a statesman, Mr. Webster has received the highest rank as a literary man. His speeches, his letters, his orations—all the products of his pen and the utterances of his tongue, will be studied and admired by future ages, not less for their consummate literary merit, than for the qualities more directly connected with the special purposes for which they were prepared. In the early part of his life, during his college days and for some years after, his style was exceedingly vicious and bombastic, to a degree which no one familiar only with his later productions would believe possible. There have been few men in this country of equally laborious and studious habits with Mr. Webster; and he devoted himself for successive years, with an earnest and resolute fidelity, to the correction and perfection of his style. He was fastidious to a remarkable degree in his choice of words, in the shaping of his sentences, and even in the punctuation and emphasis which should be given to them. And, although during his later years, as the effect of this rigid and relentless mental discipline, easy and graceful elegance of language had become so habitual with him as to seem devoid of all effort and study, he never laid aside this minute attention to his style, or suffered any point, however trifling, of critical accuracy to escape his notice. Instances of his conscientious exactitude, especially in the reports of his speeches, have repeatedly fallen under the observation of the present writer. A very foolish en-

deavor has been made by some of Mr. Webster's friends to create the impression that the great orations and speeches which have carried his celebrity all over the world, were made with little effort and trifling preparation. Even so judicious a writer as Mr. Everett, seeks to confirm the statement of Mr. March, that the reply to Hayne was the result of at most a few hours' reflection, and that all the notes he made for it were contained upon one side of a sheet of paper. This latter statement is true, so far as the notes from which he *spoke* were concerned; but the general impression conveyed in these representations is unjust to Mr. Webster, and calculated to induce very injurious theories and habits in the minds of the young. Mr. Webster had prepared himself for that debate with all his usual care. He knew a fortnight beforehand the points that would be made, the positions that would be assumed, and the parties that would be assailed. And we have no doubt that all those magnificent passages which live in the memory and glow in the heart of all who read them, were prepared beforehand, with the utmost care and the nicest discrimination in the choice of words. And the same thing is certainly true of many other of his most celebrated speeches.

But great as Mr. Webster was in all these high spheres of intellectual activity, no one who has ever had opportunities of judging will hesitate to say, that he was equally great in the more restricted department of *Conversation*. He was an accomplished scholar, especially conversant with the best portions of English literature, and more or less familiar with every subject

which engages attention. In a circle of friends, at table, or even in a *tête-à-tête* with a single person, his conversation was the richest and most instructive entertainment that can be conceived. He was sometimes a little too didactic to suit the ideal of a good converser; but no hearer ever complained of this as a fault. He expressed himself always, upon every occasion, and in making the most trifling remark, with that clearness, accuracy and weighty dignity which were inseparable from his nature. We cannot imagine a richer contribution to the literature of America and the world, than would be a record of Mr. Webster's conversations upon topics of public concern. No such perfect collection, of course, can ever be made. But those who were admitted to the high privilege of his intimate and confidential society, owe to the world some reminiscences of this great man, of whom the world can never know too much. For it is only thus that coming generations can receive that degree of instruction and advantage to which they have a claim, from Him who, in so emphatic a sense,

———" was not for an Age,
But for all Time."

THE N. Y. DAILY TIMES "LEADER" ON THE DEATH OF MR. WEBSTER.

THE event, which the whole country has, for a few days, been anticipating with the deepest sorrow, has at length occurred. Daniel Webster is no longer of the living. He has passed from the scene of his vast labors and his glorious triumphs, to join the great of all ages in the spirit-land. But he has left a nation of mourners. His family, his relatives, the extended circle of his ardent personal friends, have no monopoly of grief—but every American in whose breast beats an American heart partakes the general sorrow. No man could have departed from us who would have left so large a void—whose place could not have been more easily supplied. No name of the present day is so intimately interwrought into the very web and woof of our country's history—none, surely, to which an American may point with a more heartfelt and glowing pride. The mourning which spreads over the land will know no North, no South, no East, no West. It will not be confined by narrow limits;—State lines cannot bound it—degrees of latitude or

longitude will not check its flowing; but over the broad bosom of this great Continent, from ocean to ocean—nay, wherever on the ocean float the Stars and Stripes, there will well up from noble hearts the profoundest lamentation for the inestimable loss our country has sustained. Party animosities slink into their burrow—political rivalries and jealousies are overshadowed by the great bereavement, and hide away. The weapons of party warfare fall harmless to the ground, and contending parties and rival sections give token of humanity, and swell the tide and volume of the common grief.

It seems, indeed, a pity that such large experience, such commanding powers, gathered and strengthened amid the troublous contests, trials and vicissitudes of the world, could not have been longer vouchsafed to us, a conspicuous light and guide to the present and coming generations of men. But no endowments of heaven can guarantee an earthly existence beyond the usual limits of life; nor, however much mankind might gain, would it be just to the individual, to withhold him from that higher sphere that beckons and awaits him. But Webster's bright example and recorded wisdom remain. As he passed over the disc of this life, he has enacted his part on so conspicuous a field, that all have been able to profit by his career; and his majestic orations yet resound in every ear. It is fortunate, indeed, that his forensic reputation will not depend, as that of many great orators has done, merely on tradition. It will not die out of the memory of any succeeding generation. His own great thoughts, in his own harmonious and stirring

language, are stamped upon the living page, "and there they will remain for ever."

That Mr. Webster should at this time have surrendered his life, cannot be surprising, even to those who know how much of iron entered into his constitution, when they reflect upon the extraordinary labors he has performed. What frame but his that would not have broken down under merely the professional duties that have been cast upon him? For nearly half a century, he has been sought out, not only in his own, but in other countries and States, to sustain the chief weight and responsibility of the most important litigations. If mighty interests were at stake, or new and interesting questions involved, or if causes depended upon constitutional construction, the services were invoked of this Goliath of the North. When we remember a few of the most conspicuous of the causes in which he has been employed,—the Astor cases in this city—the Dartmouth College case—the famous steamboat case between New Jersey and New York, of *Gibbons vs. Ogden*—the *Crowningshields*—the New-York Fire cases—the Girard will—the recent India Rubber case—when we turn over the decisions of the Federal Courts of the Union, and see how numerous and important are the questions upon which he has been professionally called to shed the light of his mind—when we think how many hundreds of *nisi prius* causes he has tried, reports of which have never been embalmed in type—remembering too, that in all of these cases it has been his lot to try his strength with the ablest and most distinguished lawyers of the Union, with men whose powers

might well arouse the highest effort of transcendent genius—with Jeremiah Mason, Samuel Dexter and Joseph Story, with Pinckney, Emmett, Wirt, and with the most brilliant advocates of the present day, it may well awaken surprise that, under the pressure of such legal labors, he should have stood up so stoutly and so long. But when we accumulate the other achievements of his life—his miscellaneous studies—his laborious researches into almost every department of knowledge—his agricultural supervision and care—his varied, continuous and voluminous correspondence—his magnificent addresses upon literary and patriotic topics and occasions—his social duties though pleasing, yet rendered numerous and exhausting by his high distinction—his long continued and prodigious legislative labors in the councils of the Union, partaking in the discussions of the many exciting questions that have arrested or shaken the country—his task so successfully performed as the head of the State Department—and the wear and tear of the constant excogitation of his stupendous intellect, we are impressed with astonishment, not only at the mind that could accomplish such gigantic labors, but at the corporeal frame, which, for seventy years, could sustain the working of such huge machinery. Surely it was not of common materials, as it was not of common mould. It had the elements of rare endurance, and unwonted power. But, at last, exhausted, it has released its hold upon the great Soul that has so long inhabited and informed it. And yet, up to a very recent period, we could not speak of him as having grown old in his labors, for

years left no enervating mark upon him, but only seemed to lay an accumulating wealth of dignity and majesty upon that historic head.

In the short period of our national existence, our country has been wonderfully fruitful of great men. The stirring period of her revolutionary history was calculated to bring out and excite to utmost tension, whatever of talent, power, and genius then existed amongst her sons. The succeeding stage of her career was scarcely less adapted to call into requisition the utmost efforts of her children, in the necessity the time imposed, of reducing chaos into order, and organizing, launching, and boldly carrying forward this new government; and intellectual capabilities could not lie idle, when such tempting fields of conquest stretched within the view of laudable ambition. And yet the eye may glance along the starry names that hang in the clear sky of our national history, and it will find none of greater magnitude or brighter ray than that which has just ascended to take its merited position in the constellated dome.

In real intellectual strength it is probable that Webster rarely had his equal since the morning of time. Certainly, at the time of his death, no man known to us, in any of the nations, evinced a like capacity. Strength, mental sinew, was his crowning characteristic. The resistless power with which he trod the field of contest betokened inevitable overthrow to those who dared oppose him. When the chosen champion of the South, amidst the exultations of his friends, endeavored to bind and fetter the arms of

Webster with the tough cords that had been so long fabricating and seasoning, the giant sat in calm repose till his enemies rejoiced in the anticipated accomplishment of their object; then, slowly rising, as if sustaining the drooping hopes of the country, with the light of conscious superiority beaming from his eye, he tore asunder the strands that bound him like wisps of straw, and applying his stalwart shoulders to the temple his adversaries had reared, whelmed the structure and architects in one common and undistinguishable ruin. No intellectual contest in this country had ever excited similar hopes and fears. The whole people had started to their feet at the eloquent and audacious assault that Col. Hayne had made upon him. Great and commanding as all knew his powers to be; confident as was the reliance of his friends in the exhaustless fertility of his genius, yet every one but himself felt the tremor of fear that there was a possibility of failure, and that, in that time of awful responsibility, the lustre of his name might dim and die before the darting splendor of the Southern star. But, from the first moment that his clarion note resounded in the Senate, hope changed to confidence; then peal on peal of withering sarcasm broke over the heads of his affrighted foes; he brushed their cobweb arguments from sight, planted the patriotism of the old Bay State on an immortal eminence, and closed with a strain of deep and magnificent eloquence upon the blessings, the necessity, and the glory of the Union that has no parallel in the records of speech. What were his sensations during the delivery of this splendid oration he has

himself narrated, in answer to a friend. "I felt," said he, "as if everything I had ever seen, or read, or heard, was floating before me in one grand panorama, and I had little else to do than to reach up and cull a thunderbolt, and *hurl* it at him!"

In referring to a professional argument made by him only five or six months since, we said of him, and now repeat, that thirty years ago, when Webster was in the freshness of his ambition, and the prime of his physical life, he must have been the most convincing, resistless, terrific advocate that ever stood before a jury. So many forces mingled in him—such a substratum of common sense, the great primitive rock that supports all else—such comprehensiveness and sweep of glance—such imagination when he chose to permit its intrusion amidst his sterner thoughts—such diction, every word a sledge-hammer—such capacity for stripping off all disguises in which ingenuity may have dressed its sophistries—such advantages of person, of presence, manner, eye and voice were perhaps never united in equal proportions in any individual before. The arguments of his opponents were brittle in his hands. What Gordian knots he could not wait to untie he rent in twain. Before this tribunal—a jury—to our mind, unquestionably, though this may not accord with the general view, Webster stood in the position, of all others, best adapted to display his resources and his strength. Some suppose that the Senate furnished the brightest scene for his intellectual gladiatorship. Many think, from the logical character of his mind, that severe and close ratiocination before the Supreme Court of

the United States was the element in which he found himself most at home. And some imagine, that on great occasions of public interest and before popular assemblies, where he might escape from the unyielding bands of logic, and follow his inclination amid chosen topics, and indulge the lead of his powerful imagination, he rose above the standard of his usual accomplishment. But, in our judgment, there never was a place where he has been so thoroughly aroused, where he has come so near his possibility of effort, as when, standing before twelve jurors, in an individual case, that touched his sympathies, and fired by the immediate antagonism of able adversaries, he has put forth his energies to defend some hunted right, or pursue some grievous wrong.

A prominent feature in Mr. Webster's argumentation was the extraordinary clearness, skill and compactness of his statement. His formal statement of a case was itself a demonstration. A few simple sentences seemed to raise the question above the realm of doubt, and place it beyond assault; and his subsequent arguments hedged it around with impregnable defences.

Another admirable quality was his rare power of condensation. While other men sought to expand, he labored to condense. The material he used was not beaten into leaf, but crowded into bars and ingots. A graphic sentence oft contained the whole question and its solution. He aimed no scattering fowling-piece, that threw its innocent shot around the subject to be hit, but planted his rifle bullet in the very centre of the target.

No man could hear or read the speeches of Webster without being struck with the rich philosophy that was continually enfolding his subject. Themes that other men looked up to gaze at, he stooped to touch; and when he touched them, lifted them into the sphere he occupied, enveloped them with the affluence of his own intellect, invested them with classical allusion and golden suggestion, gave them greater dignity and higher views, and linked them to broader associations.

Mr. Webster's person wore the significance of his grandeur: it was a tenement worthy of the tenant. His ample proportions, brawny but graceful; his imposing form, his dignified manner, his imperial port, his solemn gaze, his majestic and towering head—the vision and faculty divine that looked out of those comprehensive, spiritual orbs, the intellectuality that sat enthroned upon his massive brow, impressed the beholder with unwonted awe. Most great men fall so far short of the ideal that is formed of them, that they dwindle and dwarf upon approach. Distance of time or space lends its enchantment to the view, and through its magnifying mists those gods of our idolatry loom up into Titanic stature. But to this rule Mr. Webster was an exception, almost the sole exception. We doubt, if ever the man came into his presence, who did not leave with enhanced conceptions of his native majesty and power. Nature had set her seal of greatness upon him, and the common voice of his countrymen, in calling him the “godlike,” testified that that seal was not illegible to them.

He found the solace of his pastime hours, in the

resonant voices of the waves that ocean dashed along the beach which margined his country home—in superintending agricultural uses—in walking, driving, fishing, and in the genial converse of family and troops of friends. He rose at the hour of three or four, and, in study and labor awaited the announcement of auroral dawn. The quiet and beautiful morning hours imparted to him strength and knowledge, and garlanded with freshness his momentous life.

Mr. Webster must have left materials for biography of uncommon extent and opulence. The six volumes of his speeches which have just appeared, may be immeasurably extended. His manuscripts must disclose a vast variety and range of interesting composition. His diaries and correspondence would be seized by the public with avidity, while his conversations, and the countless anecdotes concerning him, that rest in the memories of individuals, would give intense zest to his biography. We should hope that every one who had any anecdote or interesting conversation of his to relate—and who has not, that has ever spent a half hour in his presence—would commit the same to permanent form, and transmit it to some common destination, where it might await the pen of the biographer. His speeches have done much to educate the present generation of active men. In country schools, academies, and colleges, his sonorous sentences have formed the staple of declamation. He has thus poured his lofty sentiments into the minds of our youth, and every educated man of the country must this day feel that he is under

obligations he can never repay, to the inspirations of Daniel Webster. Let us now have his life, and all the productions of his pen, and such of the utterances of his tongue as may be caught and gathered, that they may all float down the stream of time, a blessing and delight to all ages—co-existent with literature and liberty. Such names and such productions make the garniture of history.

In the sadness of this occasion, how naturally, yet how sorrowfully, does the mind turn towards that splendid triumvirate of statesmen,—Clay, Calhoun, and Webster, but recently the pride and glory of the land, now enacting another stage of their destiny in the world beyond the stars. For forty years they had mingled their efforts and voices in the councils of the Union. Upon all great questions of public policy, each has left his indelible mark. Each, as we have stated heretofore, in himself a host—with physical and intellectual powers so different, yet so surpassing—though not always agreeing, indeed, sometimes at angry variance—a war among the gods—yet always inseparably associated—marching side by side through many years of pith and moment in the history of America and the world—pre-eminent in powers of thought, and in the mode of expressing thought; we see them now, with the eye of memory, in that more than Amphictyonic assemblage—Clay, with his electric fire and burning and impassioned eloquence—Calhoun, clear, terse, logical, metaphysical, with the skill of Tell, shooting an apple from the head,—and Webster, calm, grand, majestic, sitting on the loftiest peaks of Olympus, darting light-

nings, and rolling thunders. But now, alas! those eloquent voices are hushed; those great hearts have ceased their beating; their continuous guidance has been withdrawn from us;—and the American people, in sorrow and orphanage, lament their loss.

MEMORIALS OF MR. WEBSTER,
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS FROM ELMS FARM
AND MARSHFIELD.

A TRIP TO NEW-HAMPSHIRE—DANIEL WEBSTER'S FARM ON THE
MERRIMACK.

ELMS FARM, N. H., October —, 1849.

* * * I asked a physician where a dyspeptic person, suffering from want of exercise, and liable to an attack from the prevailing epidemic, could go to eradicate the one and evade the other? He answered, "Among the granite hills of New Hampshire." The cholera was then raging in New-York.

On the same day, at 6 o'clock, P. M., I was on board that paragon of steamboats, the *Empire State*, commanded by the gallant Capt. Joseph Comstock, bound for Fall River. The next day at an early hour, having passed through Boston, Lowell, and

* A portion of the following letters were published at about the period they were written,—those from Marshfield in the *Commercial Advertiser*, and several of the others in the *Courier and Enquirer*. They have all been carefully revised, however, and since Mr. Webster's death have been reproduced in the columns of the *Daily Times*, from which they are now printed.

other towns, with the speed of steamboat, I found myself here, stepping out of the car with my port-manteau, hunting apparatus and fishing-tackle, at a dingy looking dépôt building, on the front of which was inscribed, in large letters, "Webster Place."

A gentleman of venerable age and respectable appearance standing by, perceiving that I was a stranger addressed me in the most courteous manner. No tavern being near he politely tendered to me, and I accepted, the hospitalities of his house. He is the friend, and was one of the playmates and school-fellows of Mr. Webster. With a mind rich in reminiscences, and unimpaired by age, he was as instructive and entertaining as any man I have met in many a day. He goes back to his childhood, and talks of events happening then as if it were but yesterday. He talks about the Defender of the Constitution, when he was a boy, and he has made me quite familiar with that interesting period of his life, of which, by-the-by, the world has hitherto known comparatively nothing. I shall during my sojourn here, recount to you some portions of the conversation of this venerable man and his old neighbours, who sit together in the cool shades of these majestic elms, on pleasant afternoons, and live over again the scenes of their youth.

Webster Place is at Elms Farm, owned by Daniel Webster, in the town of Franklin, on the banks of the Merrimack, the home of his late father Colonel Ebenezer Webster. From filial affection Mr. Webster retains and cultivates this homestead, and doubtless will do so through life. I had no conception

that there could be found among these rugged hills, so far up this river, a spot so inviting, so enchanting. It is no wonder he loves to come here.

Taking it for granted that you, in common with the millions of intelligent citizens of the United States, are interested in knowing whatever pertains to this great man—unquestionably the greatest man of his time, and justly the object of his country's pride—I will give you a brief description of his farming lands, of this farm, its location, and some of the legends which render it, and ever will, a place of interest.

The whole extent of his farming lands in this vicinity is not less than nine hundred acres, which though composed of several tracts, do not lie contiguous to each other. I have rambled over them to-day. About 360 acres lie on the western hills bordering this valley, which are seeded for pastures, and upon it his flocks and herds feed during the summer. Limpid streams meander through it, and refreshing springs bubble up from the cool recesses of the earth to slake the thirst of both man and beast.

Beautiful trees—oak, walnut, maple, pine, &c.—are scattered profusely over the surface, affording shade and shelter, and at the same time, giving it the appearance of a vast and highly ornamented park. I rode through it in different directions, and saw nearly one hundred head of his thriving cattle, some of them thorough-bred, all good, and all apparently as fat as seals. On these hills the sweetest kind of grass grows spontaneously. On the western verge of this tract of land there is a swelling mount, the

apex of which is known as "Pisgah's top." With a telescope in my hand I ascended it, and had a view of the surrounding country, well worth all the journey hither.

This elevated point, which Mr. Webster owns as a part of his farm and values highly, he visits annually, and thence re-surveys the scenes of his childhood and youth; all of which are spread out to his view like a map at his feet—the streams in which he angled for trout; the glens and the hills where, in his boyhood, gun in hand, he chased his game, and the fields he tilled with his own hands, are often revisited, so that every incident in that bye-gone time, is kept as fresh in his memory as if it had happened but yesterday.

The view is magnificent. The Kearsage Mountain, in the County of Merrimaek, which rises 2,461 feet above the level of the sea, and the summit of which is now a bare mass of granite, but whose sides are covered with wood, stands out in bold relief. There stood its constant neighbor, Ragged Mountain, so aptly named from its rough appearance, rising 2,000 feet above the level of the sea. There stand the Mink Hills, and close by is the famous Meeting-House Hill. Looking beyond Ragged Mountain, I saw the summit of Ascutney Mountain in Vermont, which rises 3,116 feet above the Connecticut River, and 3,320 above the level of the sea. It is solid granite, and destitute of covering. Travellers make pilgrimages to its summit to take a view of the surrounding country. Looking in a northerly direction, I had a good view of the tops of the White

Mountains. You are aware that the summit of that range of crystal hills, as they were named by Neal, Jocelyn and Field, who ascended them in 1632, have since been named Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Franklin and Lafayette. Their snow-white summits are seen from "Pisgah's top," nearly sixty miles distant, and their appearance is that of a silvery cloud skirting the horizon. Mount Washington rises 6,234 feet above the sea. This is known from its being the highest and most southern. Mount Adams is next in height, and Mount Jefferson is situated between these two. They are the highest and most celebrated in New England.

There, too, in a more easterly direction, is a fine view of the Ossipee Mountain, and of its neighbors, the Gunstock Hills.

He has a small farm on which he sometimes pastures sheep, situated on the other side of the river, which embraces about one hundred acres.

The sheep and cattle which feed on these two upland farms in the summer, are, in the winter, driven to the homestead on the flats, and sometimes to Marshfield where they are foddered during the winter.

But the valuable land, that which affords him the chief inducement to own any land in this part of New England, is the farm which was his father's, and with which are associated his earliest, and perhaps fondest recollections.

It comprises about four hundred acres. About one half of it is rich bottom land, very level, handsomely laid out, and apparently under the highest state of cultivation; the other half is rolling land,

rising from the western boundary of the flats, up the gradual ascent of the higher lands, and is thickly wooded with the most desirable and thriving trees.

The facility with which timber can be taken to market, and the rapidity with which forests have disappeared, render these woodlands very valuable—perhaps the most valuable of any lands in this valley.

It is also a great pleasure to see that the farm houses, the barns, the sheds, and the fences, are all as white as paint can make them, and every object in view indicates the good husbandry of the farmer who has them in charge.

The Northern Railway passes through it near the Mansion House, and several trains of cars, freighted with passengers and the products of the country, with merchandise for the people, pass over it daily, almost annihilating time and space, giving all the advantages of a near approximation to Boston. Scattered over the surface stands a large number of aged, majestic and beautiful elms, which enrich the picture beyond the power of my pen to describe. Hence the name "Elms Farm," by which it is known from Boston to Canada. No passing traveller fails to admire its richness and its neatness.

On the southern boundary of this farm stands one of the most commanding of the elms, and marks the spot where stood an old fort, in the time of the Indian wars; and which, for many years, afforded partial protection to the frontier settlements. Tradition startles the ear with the bloody scenes and savage massacres in the days of that old fortification.

Capt. John Taylor, who has been with Mr. Webster nearly twenty years, who tills this soil, and so "jocundly drives his team a-field" every morning, without any danger to his personal safety, little dreams of the perils and sufferings of his predecessors in these identical fields.

They went forth to plant or reap, carrying with them not only their hoes and sickles, but loaded guns, cartridges, and other weapons, to defend their lives when attacked, some standing sentry to watch the stealthy approach of the murderous Indian, while the others cultivated the land or gathered in the harvests. How different the state of things now !

The legends of this beautiful spot of earth would fill a volume of realities "more romantic than romance itself."

On the old turnpike road, under the aged elms whose branches reach across the highway, affording perpetual shade, stand the two old dwelling-houses in which Colonel Ebenezer Webster, the father of Daniel, in his lifetime lived. One is more than one hundred years old, and the other more than sixty. In the latter he closed his career. No man was more respected for his many virtues.

From where I sit, is two miles and a half to the head of the Merrimack river, which is there formed by the confluence of two beautiful streams, but rejoicing in harsh Indian names, viz.: 1st, The *Pemigewasset*; which rises in the White Hills, pours down their southern slopes and declivities, dashing over many cascades, and collecting the tribute of various smaller rivers and brooks in its course. It is the

beau ideal of a mountain stream, cold, noisy, winding, and with banks of much picturesque beauty. 2d, The *Winnipiseogee*; this river issues from the great Lake of that name, which lies about N. E. from this spot. This lake is near twenty miles long, with various arms and bays like a sea. Its shores are mountainous and strikingly beautiful; especially on the north and east. The last Royal Governor, John Wentworth, had his country-house on the eastern side of this lake. This sheet of water is hardly more than 20 or 25 miles from the tide waters which come up to Dover and Berwick. Nevertheless, it discharges its waters westerly, and they reach the sea through the Merrimack, at Newburyport, having made a circuit of about 100 miles.

At this place the width of the river is about fifty rods; but a few miles below, it receives several tributary streams which greatly increase its width, and render it a river of considerable magnitude. At its mouth it is half a mile wide. On its borders are situated some of the most flourishing towns in all New England.

The surface of the lake of which I spoke, is, I think, 240 feet above tide water. The river issuing from it, and running to its junction with the Pemigewasset, a distance of about 15 or 18 miles, makes a fall of 100 feet, by several successive cascades, affording all of them, excellent mill power. The water of this river is several degrees warmer, generally, than that of the Pemigewasset; the difference being that between a mountain stream, and a stream issuing from large and deep lakes.

It is a curious fact, or rather tradition of a fact, related to me by Mr. Webster himself, who knows the habits of fishes, that when the Merrimack river was full of fish, on their arrival at the confluence of these two streams, the salmon and shad shook hands and parted; the shad all going into the lakes, the salmon all keeping up the mountain torrent, which they continued to ascend, as used to be said, till their back fins were out of water. This is still the case with the few which annually find their way over the dams and other obstructions to the fountains.

I have said, these two streams unite two-and-a-half miles above where I now am. The place was formerly called "*Webster's Falls*," but is now the site of a flourishing manufacturing village called Franklin, or more specifically, Franklin Upper Village. Mr. Webster related to me the following legend concerning a stream in which he has caught many a fish:—

Call's Brook glides meandering down a glen, and runs through the meadow to the river. It took its name from this melancholy tragedy. On the banks of the stream, at the foot of the glen, lived Philip Call. He was one of the first settlers. His wife, his son and his son's wife (the latter of whom had a small child), constituted his family. While the Messrs. Call were both in the field, and the elder and younger Mrs. Call were in the house, a small party of Indians came suddenly upon them, and went in. They were seen to enter by the men in the field, who perceiving them unarmed, and cherishing the hope that the savages would do no harm to the

women and child, they concealed themselves in the field. The younger Mrs. Call, seeing the savages entering the house, seized her child and hid herself behind the rude chimney. The Indians demanded milk and food, which the elder Mrs. Call gave them. They ate till they could eat no more. All this time the little child, who was naturally a noisy, chattering thing, remained perfectly silent with its mother; the least sound would have betrayed both. The elder lady doubtless thought that by giving them all they demanded, they would go peaceably away, though at that time a high price was paid in Canada for scalps; but she was fatally mistaken; for, instead of gratitude, Indian hatred was uppermost, and those barbarous savages killed her on the spot and carried off her scalp, while the younger woman escaped unhurt. Hence the stream is called *Call's Brook*. The child lived to a good old age, and Mr. Webster has often seen and conversed with her. He also told me another of the legends concerning this farm.

One Peter Bowen, in those days, lived also on this farm. He was a high-tempered, daring man, and was often with the Indians. He owed two of them a grudge. It so happened that he was alone with these two very Indians, coming up the river. At *Call's Brook* he shot one, and killed the other with the butt of his gun; he carelessly left their bodies partially concealed under the top of a fallen tree. The Indians were missed. Suspicion fell on Peter. His known hostility, his high temper, were circumstances against him. Besides, Peter remained in his house. The bodies were found. Peter fled.

At this time there was a treaty of amity between the whites and the Indians; and the Governor at Portsmouth sent an ambassador to the Indians in Canada, to assure them that Peter should be caught and hanged. But he eluded the officers for a month, or more, concealing himself in the woods. At length, he was caught and put into the jail at Exeter. At that time, opinion was strong against hanging a man for killing an Indian, and a party of his friends and neighbors, disguised as Mohawk Indians, went to the jail, tore it down, and released the prisoner.

After that, he was undisturbed, and for years he lived here, tilling this land. But the ghosts of the dead Indians constantly haunted him. He often saw, in his imagination, other Indians, armed to take vengeance on him, starting up from behind haycocks in the meadows, and lurking about his house. This frenzy or fear grew on him, and turned his brain, so that he, finally, in the other extreme, went into Canada and surrendered himself to the tribe of which his victims were members, and there, strange to relate, the affair was amicably settled. His offence was offset against some other offence, and he thenceforth lived to a great age—the ghosts ceased to haunt him, and he finally died in their midst, as one of the tribe.

The old Turnpike, which was lately so much crowded with teams, leads to Concord, fifteen miles below the spot, on the same side of the river. To Concord, as you know, the railroad comes from Boston, *viâ* Lowell, Nashua, Manchester, and Hooksett. A few years since, when the anti-railroad obstinacy

of the dominant political party in the State was overcome, or broken down, a charter was granted for a railroad from Concord, through Franklin, to Lebanon, on the Connecticut River. This is the great route from Boston to Montreal, though it has competition in a more Southern route, called, I think, the Massachusetts and Vermont Railroad. This route, known as the Northern Railroad, will continue to be preferred. I believe it is as near—while Manchester, Nashua, and Lowell, highly important manufacturing places, are in the line of this route, and not in that of the other.

From Concord, the railroad follows the river through Boscawen, passes through this beautiful bottom land, where I now am (here called Intervail), goes much nearer to Mr. Webster's house, I dare say, than he would wish, and keeps on up to Franklin•Upper Village. There it leaves the Merrimack, exactly at its head, and turning still further to the west than the line or valley of the Pemigewasset, it follows up a little stream, called Hancock Brook, to a beautiful lake in the woods, called "Como." Adjoining this classical sheet of water, Mr. Webster has forty acres of pine land, and on a distinguished point along the shore, quite conspicuous for a great distance, stands his whitewashed boat-house, nine feet by eighteen. To use Mr. Webster's own words; "The railroad having approached the lake, and done homage to this little edifice, inclines still farther to the southwest, and twists and turns, and wriggles, and climbs, till it finally struggles over the height of land near Cardigam Mountains, and then glides down,

like a rippling brook, through Shaker Pond, and the Mascoma, its outlet, to Connecticut River."

The house in which Col. Webster lived faces due north. The front windows look towards the river. But then the river soon turns to the south, so that the eastern windows look towards the river also. But the river has so deepened its channel, in this stretch of it, in the last fifty years, that I cannot now see its water without approaching it, or going back to the higher lands behind us. The history of this change is of considerable importance in the philosophy of streams. Mr. Webster, in a letter to a friend, who has allowed me to take it, says, he has observed it practically, and knows something of the theory of the phenomenon; but doubts whether the world will ever be benefited either by his learning or his observation in this respect. "Looking out at the east windows, with a beautiful sun just breaking out," says the letter, "my eye sweeps along a level field of 100 acres. At the end of it, a third of a mile off, I see plain marble grave-stones, designating the places where repose my father and mother, and brother, and sisters Mahitable, Abigail, and Sarah—good Scripture names, inherited from their Puritan ancestors.

"This fair field is before me. I could see a lamb on any part of it. I have ploughed it, and raked it, but I never mowed it; somehow, I could never learn to hang a scythe. My brother Joseph used to say that my father sent me to college in order to make me equal to the rest of the children."

The whip-poor-will has struck up her all-night

song, and I'll to my couch and sleep to the time her music keep.

Yours, truly.

DANIEL WEBSTER'S FATHER.

ELMS FARM, N. H., October, 1849.

Colonel Ebenezer Webster, the father of Daniel, was born at Kingston, in Rockingham County, N. H., in the year 1739. His father was among the original grantees of the land in that township in 1692, and settled there in 1700. The name of his great grandfather was Ebenezer; this was also the name of his grandfather, his own father, and of himself. This name he also gave to his eldest son, and the name is still descending. Col. Webster was a farmer, born in those troublesome times when Kingston was a frontier settlement. Savage Indians were hovering about his childhood. The tomahawk and the scalping-knife gleamed in the sunshine of every day, and his existence depended on the successful resistance against those frightful instruments of death and torture.

At an early age, he was bound as an apprentice to one Ebenezer Stevens, who, of course, brought him up. In the article of apprenticeship, Stevens was bound to send him to school for a certain length of time in each year, an obligation which, if fulfilled, would have given him a good common school education, but he violated his covenant in that respect, and never permitted his apprentice to see the inside of a

school-house for the purpose of learning; consequently he had no education except what he obtained in the chimney-corner, by the light of blazing pine knots, while others slept, and what he snatched as he passed through his boyhood. But self-taught, he learned to read and write, and made himself somewhat familiar with arithmetic. It is said of him, by those who remember him well, that he was one of the very best readers they had ever heard. The principles of elocution and oratory were intuitive in him. His voice was loud, clear and musical, and his reading and speaking were both effective. The books he took most pleasure in reading aloud for the gratification of others, were the Bible, Shakspeare, and Pope's Essay on Man. No professed elocutionist could exceed him in giving effect to what those great books contained.

In 1757, at the age of eighteen, he enlisted as a soldier in a distinguished corps called Rodgers' Rangers, engaged in the war then raging with the French and Indians on the frontier. This body of troops was taken from the boldest and hardiest of the yeomanry of New England. They were required to be doubly armed, and to carry with them both snow-shoes and skates, to be used as occasion should render necessary. Their packs were twice the weight carried by common soldiers. Stark, Putnam, and several others who were heroes in the Revolutionary war, served with the youthful soldier of whom I am speaking. The exploits of the band of rangers, as related by those who knew them, seem like romance. All along the borders of Lake George, they fought despe-

rate battles and won brilliant victories, sometimes with more than twice their numbers. Hardy as they were, those campaigns were too severe for many of these rangers, and they perished or fell fighting their battles. But Ebenezer Webster survived. He served under General Amherst in the reduction of Ticonderoga and Crown Point.

He was appointed a Captain, and his experience as a ranger, while a boy, inspired confidence in him as a man, and he had no great difficulty in raising a company in his own town. When Burgoyne had entered the territory of New-York, having taken Ticonderoga, and was making rapid strides across the country, Captain Webster, with his company, under the command of the brave General Stark, fled to the scene of action, and was engaged in the spirited and successful engagement with Count Baum, at Bennington.

The following account of the part he performed is more brief than I can relate it. I therefore substitute it for what I would say:—

It had been given out by Stark some time previous to the battle, that it was his intention to march to Stillwater, and a detachment of the British, one thousand strong, was consequently sent to intercept him. The forces of the enemy having been thus divided and weakened, the American general was enabled to cope with them in detail. Col. Warner was stationed in the rear of the American army, with a reserved corps, while Captain Webster was ordered to advance with his company of one hundred men, in search of two hundred more, who were out upon a

scout. The companies once united, Captain Webster was to assume the command of the whole, and fall upon the enemy in the rear, but on no account to fire until the action had commenced on the other side. It was on this memorable occasion that General Stark uttered the celebrated words: "Fellow-soldiers ! there is the enemy ; if we don't take them, Molly Stark will be a widow to-night !" Captain Webster having fulfilled the duty assigned him in collecting together the three hundred men, awaited his share in the honors of the day. When allowed to make his charge upon the enemy, with pieces loaded, and with firm and equal step, his men advanced upon the opposing breastworks. Captain Webster was the first to leap the defences, but the reinforcements were not sufficient to render the attack successful, and his command was driven back. Meantime the British were strengthened by the arrival of one thousand fresh troops upon the field, and a new disposition of the battle became necessary. General Stark placed Captain Webster and Captain Gregg on the left wing of the American force, Colonel Nichols on the right, and placed the army in a strong position. The result of that struggle is a matter of history, and a large proportion of its fame is due to the efforts of Ebenezer Webster.

He was engaged in the battle at White Plains, and was also at the surrender of Burgoyne himself, on the plains of Saratoga. In every instance he proved himself worthy of all honor, and that confidence in him was never misplaced.

After the peace of 1783, having done his part in

achieving the glorious independence of his country, he returned his sword to its scabbard and again resumed the arts of peace. His sons and daughters grew up around him, and aided him in his struggles with adversity. Prosperity dawned upon him; his log cabin, in which some of his children were born, gave place to a more comfortable dwelling. For his toils and sacrifices he received the rewards he sought, which were, competence for himself and family, and the approval and respect of his friends and neighbors. He was not indebted to advantageous circumstances for anything, but to his own hands for all he had, all he accomplished.

A large and valuable tract of country, situated between New England, New-York and Canada, was secured to the British dominions, and it became the interest of the Governors of New Hampshire and New-York to vie with each other in granting those lands to patentees and receiving the emoluments.

The grants were of townships equal to six miles square. Sixty townships were granted on the west side of the Merrimack River, and eighteen on the east side. A reservation was made in each township of 500 acres for the Governor. The township of Salisbury was thus granted to Ebenezer Webster, Edward Eastman, Philip Call, Benjamin Pettengill, Andrew Bohounow, Nathaniel Melton, and others. The township was situated on the west side of the river extending far back on the hill and embracing a part of the present township of Franklin, and especially that part in which Elms Farm is included.

After this grant was obtained, Mr. Webster took

up his march, and with the others penetrated the unbroken forest, to the spot or farm he chose for his location, and which was then fifteen miles beyond Concord, the frontier garrison town at that time, and there, where I stood to-day, the youthful and daring soldier, the war being ended, cleared away the trees with his own hands, erected his log cabin, and established himself, to become a useful member of society—to rear a family and to defend his fireside from whatever danger might threaten its peace.

While he and his friends who had ventured with him into that wilderness, were clearing their lands, observing the growth of their children, and making rapid progress towards independence in their worldly circumstances, the revolutionary storm burst out, and called him from his farm to the battle field. He was accustomed to danger, but not to fear; and he was prepared, from previous training, for a sudden response to his country's call.

Sometimes it happens that such men are sneered at, and the toils of the humble and poor are mentioned, and even cast in the teeth of their children by way of disparagement. While I stood upon the spot where that log cabin stood, I called to mind what Mr. Webster said in August, 1840, at Saratoga, in reply to the imputation cast upon Gen. Harrison, candidate for the office of President, that he "*was born in a log cabin!*" Hear him:

"Gentlemen: It is only shallow-minded pretenders, who either make distinguished origin matter of personal merit, or obscure origin matter of personal reproach. Taunt and scoffing at the humble condi-

tion of early life, affect nobody in this country but those who are foolish enough to indulge in them, and they are generally sufficiently punished by public rebuke. A man who is not ashamed of himself, need not be ashamed of his early condition.

“Gentlemen, it did not happen to me to be born in a log cabin, but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log cabin, raised amid the snow-drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early, as that when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of a white man’s habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist. I make to it an annual visit. I carry my children to it, to teach them the hardships endured by the generations which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early affections, and the touching narrations and incidents, which mingle with all I know of this primitive family abode. I weep, to think that none of those who inhabited it are now among the living, and if ever I am ashamed of it, or if I ever fail in affectionate veneration for HIM who raised it and defended it against savage violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and through the fire and blood of a seven years’ revolutionary war, shrunk from no danger, no toil, no sacrifice to serve his country, and to raise his children to a condition better than his own, may my name, and the name of my posterity be blotted for ever from the memory of mankind !”

After the peace, on the more perfect organization

of the militia of this State, Captain Webster was promoted to the office of Colonel of a Regiment, which office he long held, and took great pride and pleasure in attending to military affairs. It is said of him there was never a finer-looking officer in the field. He was a large, well proportioned, dignified looking man. In giving the word of command his remarkable voice rose above any tumult, no matter how great, and was heard distinctly by every man on parade.

He was often elected a member of the Legislature of this State, sometimes to the Senate and sometimes to the Assembly, and he always exercised that influence which is due to commanding talents and virtuous character. There was in his time a wealthy and influential family belonging to the opposite party in politics, who were his rivals for political distinction, and not unfrequently were opposing candidates. To promote their success they made strenuous efforts and brought to their aid their wealth and other advantages, but all in vain. The recital of one of the deeds of the gallant Colonel, or the repetition of one of his patriotic speeches to his brothers in arms, would outweigh all that could be said or done on the other side, and Colonel Webster never failed to be chosen. In the year 1791 he was appointed a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, the duties of which he discharged with integrity and honor till his death.

Although his education was limited, being self-taught entirely, yet he was a man of strong, good sense; he read much, and was thoroughly acquainted with the Constitution of the States and of the United

States, and he studied profoundly the laws of the land, as they affected the rights and duties of the people. His opinions were held in great respect by all who had the opportunity of knowing them. His general knowledge was very great. Like his sons, Ezekiel and Daniel, he excelled in conversation, and his society was sought by all intelligent men.

Judge Webster selected the farm on the hill, where he first settled, without much regard to its soil, but because it was thickly wooded with pine timber for market, and on account of a convenient mill privilege afforded by Punch Brook, a considerable stream running through it. There he built a saw-mill and a grist-mill. But after the timber had disappeared, and the population on the flat lands had greatly increased, he sold his land on the hill, and occupied Elms Farm, now owned, as stated in my previous letter, by his son Daniel.

The Judge was twice married, and was the father of ten children—five by his first wife, and five by the second. None are now living except the sage of Marshfield.

The Judge, after a life of sixty-seven years, well spent, died at this place.

In the letter to which I have alluded, Mr. Webster, speaking of his father, said "he was the handsomest man I ever saw, except my brother Ezekiel; and he appeared to me, and so he does now seem to me, as my memory restores him, the very finest human form that ever I laid eyes on. I saw him in his coffin—a white forehead, a tinged cheek—a complexion as clear as heavenly light!"

In the grave-yard, a little distant from where I am writing, repose his mortal remains. A plain marble slab marks the spot where he sleeps, and on that slab is this simple inscription: "Ebenezer Webster, Esq., *Died April 22nd, 1806, Aged 67.*" By the side of that grave is the grave of Daniel Webster's mother. On the plain marble slab that tells where she sleeps, is the simple inscription: "Abigail, *Wife of Ebenezer Webster, Esq., Died April 25th, 1816, Aged 76.*"

In the letter from which I am permitted to make extracts, Mr. Webster thus sums up the character of his father :

"He had in him what I recollect to have been the character of some of the old Puritans. He was deeply religious, but not sour—on the contrary, good-humored, facetious—showing even in his age, with a contagious laugh, teeth all white as alabaster—gentle, soft, playful—and yet having a heart in him that he seemed to have borrowed from a lion. He could frown—a frown it was; but cheerfulness, good-humor and smiles composed his most usual aspect.

"He died at sixty-seven years of age—after a life of exertion, toil and exposure—a private soldier, an officer, a legislator ; a judge—everything that a man could be, to whom Learning never had disclosed her 'ample page.'"

I have seldom considered the biography of a plain man with more satisfaction than his. How I wish he could have been permitted to see the greatness of his son.

THE BIRTH-PLACE OF DANIEL WEBSTER—HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

ELMS FARM, *October* —, 1849.

Mr. Webster was born on the 18th day of January, 1782, in the town of Salisbury. The house in which that important event happened, stood on the highway named the North Road, far up the western hill which borders on the valley of the Merrimack. What is Franklin was a part of that old township, and for a long time was called New Salisbury. The farm is now owned by one Captain Sawyer. It was originally owned and occupied by Col. Ebenezer Webster, the father of Mr. Webster, and of whom I have given you some account in a previous letter. Not a vestige of that habitation remains, to mark the place, unless it is the cellar, now partly filled up, and the trunk of an ancient apple-tree, the top of which is dead, but from which, near the earth, are sprouting forth a few thriving branches. From these, I cut a walking staff, which I have sent to my excellent friend, Luther R. Marsh, Esq., an eminent counsellor at the bar in your city.

At a short distance from the place of his birth is the old well, in which hangs an "iron-bound bucket." This well was excavated by his father, long before Mr. Webster was born, and from it his family were accustomed to draw the pure and cool water to slake their thirst, as I drew it yesterday to quench mine. By the side of this well stands an elm-tree, planted by his father about the year 1768. It has grown luxuriantly, and its branches extend over a circle

one hundred feet in diameter—affording perpetual shade to the well, and to those who choose to sit under them. For more than sixty years, almost annually, Mr. Webster has sat occasionally under that tree, and drank of that water. Scattered about the premises, near the well, are a few ancient apple, plum, and pear trees, which were planted by Captain Eastman, his mother's father, and who during the latter part of his life, lived with Col. Webster.

Near the spot runs "Punch Brook," which was then a roaring, rattling, bubbling stream, of considerable importance; but clearing the lands about its sources, has diminished it to a little rivulet, which meanders on its way along the hill-side, through glens and meadows, to the river. It was in this brook that Mr. Webster remembers he caught his first fish. He never passes the spot where that exploit was performed, without relating the anecdote not only of taking the trout, but of the ducking he had when a child.

On the opposite side of the road, is the site of the old mill, built by Col. Webster immediately after he took possession of this land. Yesterday, I called to pay my respects to Lieutenant Benjamin Pettingill, a venerable old man, who related to me many pleasing anecdotes concerning the family of Mr. Webster; and, among other things, he said, that he well remembered going to that mill with his grist, and having waited for it to be ground by Ebenezer Webster the eldest brother of Daniel. Two huge rocks projecting from the bank, on each side of the stream, formed the abutments of the old mill-dam,

and the remains of the constructed portion are still visible. No traces remain of the old mill itself, unless they are the mill-stones. After their use was discontinued, these valuable relics were carried up the bank and put into a cellar-wall, where I saw them. The building that stood over the cellar has long since gone to decay, but there stand the grinding stones facing each other, which, for many years, assisted in making bread for the pioneers of all this section of the country. Were they mine, I would not be Vandal enough to break them to pieces.

There are on the farm a few fertile spots which rewarded its present owner satisfactorily for his toil and pains; but the granite rocks visible in all directions, render a great portion of it fit only for pasturage. Such is the birth-place of the greatest man of our time. Is such a spot without interest?

Mr. Daniel Webster was one of ten children; himself the ninth. I will mention each one in the order of their ages.

Ebenezer Webster was his eldest brother. He always resided at home, where he not only cultivated the farm but aided his father in carrying on the mills. He died at an early age, and was buried in the ancient burying-ground, on the North Road. Daniel scarcely knew him.

Olivia Webster was his eldest sister. I know nothing of her, save only that she too died at an early age.

Susannah Webster, the next to his eldest sister, married Mr. John Colby. He is still living a venerable and highly respected old gentleman in Bosca-

wen, but she has long since been numbered with the dead. She left several children who reside in the vicinity.

David Webster, next to his eldest brother, married Mrs. Huntoon. He was a farmer, and at an early day removed with his family to Canada, where he lived and died. He had a large family of children, and some of the descendants are eminent men and women, who are making their mark on the time. Some of them hold important offices under the Government of that country.

Joseph Webster, the next brother, married a Miss Colby. He was remarkable for his ready wit. He too, was a farmer. He died, January 28, 1810, aged 41. He had two children, who I think are still living.

Mahitable Webster was the third sister. She was a woman much beloved by her acquaintances, and never married. She died July 4, 1814, aged 37.

Abigail Webster, the fourth sister, married Mr. Haddock, who long resided and finally died in Franklin. The old house in which he died stands near this farm. She was the mother of Dr. Charles B. Haddock, now, perhaps, the most eminent Professor at Dartmouth College, and unquestionably a good scholar, if not the greatest man in the State. Among those who know him his reputation stands high. He has been in the Legislature, and was prominent among the Whigs as a candidate for the office of Senator in Congress.

Mrs. Haddock, his mother, long since departed

this life. Her grave is among others in the burying ground near Elms Farm.

Honorable Ezekiel Webster was the next older than Daniel, and was his full brother—the others being only half-brothers.

He was born in Salisbury, and although older than Daniel, yet he followed him two years or more through college and through the study of the law—not having taken up his books or made any preparation till Daniel had made rapid advances and had proved what could be done under disadvantageous circumstances. When admitted to the bar he opened his office in Boscawen, and went immediately into an extensive and lucrative practice.

His extraordinary talents and great private worth placed him in the front rank of his profession, and indeed in the front rank of men? His wisdom and solid judgment in all the affairs of men, commanded the respect and admiration of all. He was often in the Senate and Assembly of New Hampshire. There was no man living for whose judgment and advice Mr. Webster had so much respect as that of his brother Ezekiel. It is said of him that all he ever asked was the approval of Ezekiel. The applause of the multitude, the laudations of the press, the flattering attention of an entranced Senate, all dwindled to insignificance when compared with the silent but certain approbation of Ezekiel! It is said of the Roman Coriolanus, that the greatest incentive to action he ever had in his career of glory was the desire to do frequently acts that would meet the approbation of his mother. So it was with Mr.

Webster, while his mother lived ; but when she was no more his mind turned to Ezekiel.

When, after his reply to Gen. Hayne, in the Senate, his fame rose to its zenith, and his praises were sounded wherever the English language was spoken, Ezekiel had departed this life. Then, Mr. Webster, as if doubtful of it all, was heard to say, "*How I wish my poor brother had lived till after this speech, that I might know if he would have been gratified.*"

On the 10th of April, 1829, while Ezekiel was in Court, at Concord, in the midst of one of his most brilliant forensic efforts, death aimed his fatal dart, and he fell dead at the feet of the Judges. He died from a disease of the heart, at the age of forty-nine, beloved and lamented by all who knew him, and at that time by far the most worthy and influential man in this State.

The following notice of his death was entered in a Pastor's Journal the day on which it took place.

April 10, 1829.—This day witnessed the most solemn scene I ever beheld. At three o'clock, P. M., Hon. Ezekiel Webster, of Boscawen, commenced an argument before the Court of Common Pleas, in Concord. I sat directly before him. He stood firm, dignified. His voice, clear, full, strong. His plea connected, convincing, powerful. His health apparently good ; and his whole appearance that of a man in the possession and exercise of his noblest powers. He had spoken about twenty minutes, when he fell backwards and expired without a struggle or a groan. The impression of this instant was awful. Every

face was pale!—every heart trembled! The immortal spirit was gone—and the realities of the invisible world seemed in full prospect. ‘In the midst of life we are in death.’ May I never forget the scene, or the instruction it imparts.”

I have taken some pains to ascertain the mental endowments, the character, and standing of this truly eminent brother of Mr. Webster, and everything I have learned has excited my admiration. I cannot, however, give you a better idea of him than by using almost the very words in which I find him described by one of his classmates in College. I have it before me and will give you what he says:

In college, he was the first in his class; his intellect was of a very high order; its capacity was general, for he was able to comprehend the abstruse and difficult, and at the same time to enjoy the tasteful and the elegant. He was distinguished for classical literature.

His knowledge of Greek, particularly, was beyond that of his cotemporaries in college; and this is almost an unqualified proof of taste, when the study is pursued from a real fondness for the language, and not merely for the pride of learning, or for the rewards of superiority.

His knowledge of English literature was deep and extensive, for he had not skimmed over books as a matter of amusement, but he looked into them as a man of mind, who intends to draw lessons from all he reads. Few men among our scholars knew so much of the English poets as he did, and he valued them as he should have done, as philosophers and painters of

human nature, from whom much knowledge may be obtained to illustrate and adorn what duller minds have put into maxims and rules

He made himself master of the law as a science, and became well acquainted with its practice in his native State. He went up to the first principles with the ease and directness of a great mind, and separated at once that which was casual and local from that which is permanent and founded on the basis of moral justice and the nature of man. There seemed no effort in anything he did ; all was natural and easy, as if intuitive. There was nothing about him of that little bustling smartness so often seen in ordinary persons striving to perform something to attract the attention of the little world around them.

His general information was not only extensive, but laid up in excellent order ready for use. He was steadily engaged in the duties of his profession, but never seemed hurried or confused in his business. He took all calmly and quietly. He did nothing for parade or show, or mere effect, nor did he speak to the audience while addressing the court and jury. His life was passed in habits of industry and perseverance ; and his accumulations of wealth and knowledge were regular and rapid. From the commencement of his life as a reasoning being, responsible for his own actions to the close of it, he preserved the most perfect consistency of character—no paroxysms of passion, no eccentricities of genius were ever found in him. His equanimity was only equalled by his firmness of purpose. In this he was most conspicuous ; he thought leisurely and cautiously, and having

made up his mind he was steadfast and immovable.

Having no hasty or premature thoughts, he seldom had occasion to change his opinion, and was, therefore, free from those mortifying repentances, so common to superior minds of warmer temperament.

By honesty of purpose and soundness of judgment, he kept a just balance in weighing all matters before him. All this firmness and equanimity, and other virtues, seemed constitutional, and not made up by those exertions so necessary to most frail beings, who intend to support a character for steady habits. He was blessed with a frame that felt few or no infirmities, such as weaken the nerves and bring down the mighty in intellect to those degrading superstitions that stain the brightness of genius and destroy the high hopes of immortal beings, and make them slaves to darkness and absurdity.

He suffered no moral or mental weakness in his whole path of duty, for his constitution, until within a short time of his death, exhibited a sound mind in a sound body, and neither appeared essentially injured or decayed, to the hour of his exit from the world.

He never sought public honors, nor literary or political distinctions, and therefore had none of those throes and agonies so common to vaulting ambition; not that he declined all public trusts, when he was conscious that he could do any good to his fellow-men. He was several years a member of one or the other branch of the Legislature of New Hampshire, and served as a trustee of Dartmouth College. He was at different times put up for a member of Congress,

but it was at periods when his friends thought that his name would do some good to his political party, as the members of Congress in New Hampshire were chosen by a general ticket; but when they were decidedly in power, he would seldom or never consent to be a candidate. This was much to be regretted, for he was admirably calculated for public life by his extensive knowledge and incorruptible integrity. He would have been a first-rate speaker on the floor of Congress. His eloquence was impressive and commanding. There was in his delivery a slight defect in the labial sounds—in the familiar use of his voice, which was rather pleasant to the listener than otherwise, for it was a proof of a natural manner; but warmed by his subject, a more rich, full, and sonorous voice, was seldom heard in any public body; not that his tones were delicate or mellifluous, but full of majesty and command, free from arrogance, timidity, or hesitation. His gestures were graceful, but not in the slightest degree studied; his language was rich, gentlemanly, select, but not painfully chosen; he not only had words for all occasions, but the very words he should have used.

As a writer he excelled in judgment and taste; there was a classical elegance in his familiar writings; and his higher compositions were marked with that lucid order and clearness of thought and purity of expression which distinguished the Augustan age. His sentences were not grappled together by hooks of steel, but connected by golden hinges, that made a harmonious whole. His library was rich in works of merit, ancient and modern. The history of literature

and science was as familiar to him as that of his native State, and he had the means of turning to it with much greater facility.

He was an instance in point that a man may be a good lawyer, and yet devote some of his time to the classical pursuits.

Ezekiel Webster was one of those great men, rare instances in the world, who had thrown away ambition; and who preferred to be learned and happy in his course of life, rather than to court the gale and spread his sails, to be wafted along on public opinion. He sought not popularity, but he had it; *that popularity which follows, not that which is run after.*

He watched the signs of the times, and was as good a diviner in politics as any one; but whatever the presages were, he looked at coming events unmoved, leaving their results to Heaven.

For several of the last years of his life, he was curtailing his business in order to devote some portion of the prime of his manhood to literary and scientific pursuits, so congenial to his heart; but in this he was disappointed, for yet while in the fulness of his strength he was called to leave the world, for whose benefit he was formed. The ways of Providence are right, however hidden the laws are from us. It is to be regretted that one so able should have written so little as he has; probably he was waiting for those hours of leisure, in which he was contemplating to form his plan of some literary work. The writer once suggested to him the history of his native State as a subject for his pen, and the thought did not seem unpleasant to him.

No one had a more admirable spirit of criticism than Ezekiel Webster, united with that generous indulgence which only great minds feel and practise. A few months before he died, some symptoms of a disease of the heart were perceptible, but not alarming to his friends; but he knew the uncertainty of human life, and, without any special command, *set his house in order*, and made preparation for his long journey. There is a beauty in that calm, deep, silent, religious feeling, that none but great and pure minds can ever know. After having put all his worldly affairs into a most perfect train for settlement at his death, and wishing his friends to be free from all doubts upon his religious impressions and belief, he sat down and wrote his sentiments on this momentous subject, which were found on his table after his death. This was his last composition. How true it is, that the enjoyment of health, the accumulating of wealth, the pursuits of science, and the love of letters, and the world's applause, sanctioned by the good man's benison, are not for an immortal mind. All these things are, in a great measure, connected with fellow-mortals, and are finite in their influences upon the mind, while religion is a connection with infinity, with Deity; it enters into eternity, leaves time and sense to earth, and by the bright inspirations of faith, takes the *sting from death, and from the grave its victory*.

A great mind, accustomed to "long converse with the invisible world," and seeing, day after day, his friends falling around him, breathes as each descends to the tomb,

How dreary is this gulf! how dark—how void—
 The trackless shores, that never were repass'd!
 Dread separation! on the depth untried,
 Hope falters, and the soul recoils aghast!

Wide round the spacious heavens I cast my eyes;
 And shall these stars glow with immortal fire?
 Still shine the lifeless glories of the skies!
 And could thy bright, thy living soul expire

Far be the thought! The pleasures most sublime;
 The glow of friendship, and the virtuous tear;
 The soaring wish that scorns the bounds of time,
 Chill'd in the vale of death, but languish here.

Sarah Webster, his youngest sister, was the tenth child, and next to him. She married her cousin, Mr. Ebenezer Webster, and always lived in Franklin. She died March 19, 1831, aged twenty-one.

In 1846, Mr. Webster in a letter to a friend, while speaking of his father, says: "The grave has closed upon him, as it has on all my brothers and sisters. We shall soon be all together. But this is melancholy, and I leave it. Dear, dear kindred blood, how I love you all!"

Peace be to their ashes.

Yours truly.

DANIEL WEBSTER IN HIS INFANCY AND BOYHOOD.

ELMS FARM, N. H., October —, 1849.

I shall now proceed to speak of the events of Mr. Webster's life.

The first time he appeared in public, before one of those audiences which he has so often delighted,

was when carried to the old church that stood on "Meeting-House Hill," to be christened. His *speech* on that occasion is not reported, nor was there anything recorded as to his manner, or the qualities of his voice; but in the report of his speeches on subsequent occasions, so much has been said about the dignity of his manner, his self-possession, his retorts, his repartees, his indignation when assailed, and of the strength and peculiarity of his voice; we may thence infer something as to what was his deportment on his first appearance. I think he gave the audience a *touch* as to the qualities of his voice.

The ceremony of baptism was performed in the most imposing manner by Rev. Jonathan Searle, who for many years was the clergyman of the parish. You should know something of the man, in order to get an idea of his mode of administration. Regarding himself as an extraordinary personage, and attaching great importance to his high calling and everything pertaining to it, he always claimed and received much homage from the people to whom he preached. He wore a tri-cornered cocked hat, powdered wig, ornamented knee and shoe buckles, with the most ample surplice and gown. While his manner, in all ceremonies of the church, was pompous in the extreme, he was condescending and courteous to people of rank and respectability, and kind to all, no matter how humble. The christening of the child of Colonel Ebenezer Webster was an event of some considerable moment, and, of course, everything due to the occasion was said and done.

Tradition says the day was bright and beautiful ;

and the following anecdote is told to show how readily certain persons can step from what they would have us think the sublime, to what others laugh at as the ridiculous. I must tell it to you. I have heard Mr. Webster tell it, as he said it was told to him by one who saw it.

There was a lady of the congregation by the name of Mrs. Clay, doubtless an excellent woman, but she was proud, and passionately fond of dress and display, which was no crime.

Her bonnet was of the most ample dimensions, and at this particular time it was in that respect at the very extreme of fashion. It was, moreover, bedecked with a large veil, numerous bows of ribbons and feathers, among which a fresh wind created much fluttering. The ceremony of the altar being over, this lady, as she was accustomed to do on such occasions, assumed a prominent position in the broad aisle as the congregation was leaving the house, and there waited till Rev. Mr. Searle, Col. Webster and his lady, approached, that she might speak to them, especially to congratulate the latter on the interesting event that had just transpired. Having made her compliments to the party, and patted Daniel on the cheeks, she was walking along by the side of the stately parson across the green. In the midst of the courteous salutations of the pompous clergyman to her ladyship, a mischievous flaw of wind struck her bonnet and carried it away, floating like a balloon on the breeze, whirling and leaping down the hill side. Mrs. Clay, of course, was anxious for the fate of her best bonnet, and spoke to the parson.

"Dear sir, will you pick up my bonnet?"

The parson, of course, condescendingly strutted after it, but he could not so far unbend his dignity as to *run* in the presence of his congregation. His walk was not sufficiently rapid to overtake the bonnet. She again appealed to him, at the same time following close to his heels,—

"Reverend Sir, do stop my bonnet, it will be ruined!"

The parson increased his strides, and, as it hung by a twig, came near capturing it, but just as he was about to clutch it, away it went again. She then concentrated into her voice and manner all her pathos,—

"Do, Reverend and dear Sir, be so good as to hasten on and stop my bonnet; what shall I do!"

The clergyman was now extending his strides to the utmost extent of his long legs, and was on the fastest walk which his dignity would permit, but the bonnet still whirled and twitched on beyond his reach; destruction seemed inevitable; her patience was exhausted; she threw aside all restraint, and, at the top of her voice, forgetting the dignity of the parson, she cried out—

"Searle, you *devil you*, why don't you run?"

This appeal spurred him into a *run*, by which he caught the truant bonnet, and restored it to the half-frantic lady. The race down Meeting-House Hill, by Rev. Mr. Searle and Mrs. Clay, in pursuit of the bonnet, will never be forgotten.

The old church has long since disappeared. The apex of the hill on which it stood is now a part of an

extensive pasture, on which bleating flocks and lowing herds feed at pleasure, or roam over it, unconscious, of course, of any of the past events which have invested it with interest to those who like to know the legends of that neighborhood.

On the spot where the old meeting-house stood I shot a brace of birds which, to-morrow, will be cooked for my dinner, and, after sitting an hour, listening to the stories related by an aged but well-informed farmer, concerning "the rude forefathers of the hamlet," I returned to the Valley of the Merrimack, delighted with a pleasant day's rambling.

After the close of the Revolutionary war, when business of all kinds began to prosper, Col. Webster bought the house still standing in a bend of the old turnpike road, built by one Elizabeth Gale. It is a two-story frame building, to which has since been added a front piazza. Daniel was then a mere child. Soon after this removal, Mr. Haddock, the father of the eminent Professor, built the present mansion-house, and, after occupying it for a short time, transferred it to Col. Webster, in exchange for the one built by Mrs. Gale. Thereupon, Col. Webster removed into it with his family. I described this house and farm in a former letter.

Mr. Webster's first instructress was his mother. She taught him the letters of the alphabet, and, with a watchful anxiety that always distinguished her, was careful that her son devoted as much time as possible to learning. She prophesied in his infancy his future distinction, and fortunately lived to see her prophecy fulfilled. He was in Congress before she died.

Happy woman ! She was remarkable for her intellect, her piety, and the truest affections. She was loved and respected by all who knew her, and, more than that, was *venerated* by her children. Mr. Webster has often been heard to say, his mother taught him to read the Bible ; he could read that before he went to school.

It is often asserted by those who know the family, that the extraordinary genius with which Mr. Webster is endowed by nature, descended to him on his mother's side ; at all events, she was unwearied in her efforts to make him what she wished him to be—the first in the ranks of those around him.

New Hampshire was backward in organizing and providing for common schools. At the time Daniel was old enough to attend, there was no regular school in his vicinity. But the immediate neighbors of Col. Webster, as well as himself, were anxious to have their children taught ; and, to accommodate them, a Mr. Chase, a schoolmaster, hired a room in the house of Mr. Sandborn, near this farm, and Daniel, with other small children, went daily to him, to be taught to spell and read. The house is still standing.

The common school law of the State divided each town into two or more school districts. Salisbury was so divided that the district in which he lived extended from the river backward several miles among the hills. In it there were three school-houses—one on the river at this place, one on the north road, and the third in the western part of the district.

The trustees at length employed a Mr. William Hoyt, a schoolmaster by profession, for the district.

This man taught a school for four months in the first school-house, then four months in the middle house, and then the remainder of the year in the most remote.

This routine he repeated annually for several years. Mr. Webster was sent to Mr. Hoyt. The first school-house that he ever entered was built of logs, and stood on the easterly side of the old road, about one hundred yards northerly from this farm, between two ancient butternut trees, but not a vestige of the old house remains.

When Mr. Hoyt occupied the middle school-house, Daniel attended only, carrying his dinner with him in a basket; but when the third house was occupied, Col. Webster paid for his board in the western part of the town. He went on Monday morning, and came home on Saturday, making those journeys on his rather young and tender feet. I drove over this same road yesterday, and fancied I saw Mr. Webster, a little fellow, climbing the hills, crossing the streams, carrying a heavy heart as he went, and bringing a light one on his return.

But Mr. William Hoyt was not eminent as a teacher. He was a good *scribe*, and in the art of penmanship he excelled, but in no other. He taught the boys to read and spell, to write, and to understand, to some extent, the fundamental rules of arithmetic. He was severe in his discipline, and played the tyrant to the extent of his brief authority over the unlucky little fellows who, perchance, went counter to his decrees. A year or two enabled Mr. Webster to learn from him all the pedagogue could teach that was

worth knowing. But William Hoyt had the honor of being one of the teachers of the first man in this country, and his memory is entitled to our respect. "He taught that boy," was his chaplet—his claim to renown.

Under the teaching of this master, Mr. Webster learned to write a beautiful hand.

Among those who taught Mr. Webster, and the next in order to Mr. Chase, was a Master Tappan, now known as Colonel Tappan, who still lives, at the age of eighty-two, and is kindly remembered by his pupil. There he learned to spell; it is said of him there was no word in the spelling book that was not also in his memory. There, too, he learned the rudiments of arithmetic. With his rude slate and pencil he could work out the simple problems, taught by such a master, in such a school. He learned the art of reading well from his excellent father, who was noted for this accomplishment.

His love of elocution, his taste for oratory, his knowledge of true eloquence, which have shone conspicuously on all subsequent occasions, were the result of twigs first bent in the right direction, by hearing his father read as *he could read*, the Bible, Shakspeare and Pope.

Professor Sandborn, who relates many incidents concerning him, says that aged men, who are familiar with his early life, mention, among their earliest recollections of his childhood, a fondness for books above his years. His father kept open doors for all travelers. The teamsters, who came from the North, were accustomed to say, when they arrived at Judge Web-

ster's house, "Come, let us give our horses some oats, and go in and hear little Dan read a Psalm." They always called for him; and, leaning upon their long whip-stocks, listened with delighted attention to the elocution of the young orator.

Yours. truly.

DANIEL WEBSTER A BOY—OUT-DOOR SPORTS—FIRST TIME HE READ
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

ELMS FARM, N. H., Oct. -- 1849.

Mr. Webster did not, of course, go to school every day. He had a due regard for that old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." There were Saturday afternoons, holidays, and occasional pretty long vacations, which he hailed with delight—and he frequently took a holiday, as all boys will, on his own account. On these occasions he entered zealously into all kinds of out-door amusements. Besides he did boy's work on his father's farm.

He rode the horse in plowing furrows between rows of corn; he raked the hay, followed the reapers and bound up the wheat as they cut it; he drove the mares to their pastures in the morning and home again boys to t. No little hands or little feet could accomplish exre than his in anything not beyond his strength. He was to-day conversed with an old farmer who, in to the syhood, labored with him in the field many a little r

cree During the season for "haying and harvesting," f Daniel always staid from school, as a matter of course,

and went into the fields with the men to do what he could to gather in the crops, for the hay was to be made while the sun shone, and the grain was to be cut when it was ripe. With his straw hat, his "tow frock and trowsers," his rake or sickle in hand, he worked from morning till night, and never was heard to complain. He shrunk not from industry when it was apparent it could be turned to a good account.

He obtained, by working on the farm, a thorough knowledge of agricultural business, and the taste acquired for it then has continued, and is now his strongest passion. In these fertile fields, beneath these elms, he imbibed his first ideas of farming, which have ripened into a knowledge not surpassed by any agriculturist of the age in which he lives.

In his great speech on "The Agriculture of England," at a meeting of the members of the Legislature of Massachusetts, and others interested, at the State House, in Boston, January 13th, 1840, he began by stating that "he regarded agriculture as the *leading interest* of society; and as having in all its relations, a direct and intimate bearing upon human comfort and national prosperity. *He had been familiar with its operations in his youth*, and he had always looked upon the subject with a lively and deep interest." His speeches in England and at Rochester, N. Y., all confirm what I have said.

He had a strong propensity for out-door recreations at that early period of his life, and he has cultivated it from that day to this. No man in the country is more fond of fishing, hunting, sailing, riding, or driving, than Mr. Webster. He has not the least

taste or fondness for in-door amusements. He never played a game of chess or checkers in his life ; nor billiards, nor ten-pins. He never played, and it is said, does not know, a game of cards, besides whist, a game which he will play with ladies or gentlemen in the evening, before his early hour for retiring. His passion is, and always was, for out-door recreations. To this he is unquestionably much indebted for the robust constitution he established on arriving at manhood, and which he has sustained throughout his career. In his childhood and youth he was not robust, but on the contrary, he had what was regarded a feeble constitution. He appeared like a youth inclined to consumption.

I went to-day to some of the places where he indulged his propensity for out-door amusements. A quarter of a mile beyond the site of the old school-house, is the hill where he so often went to slide. My informant, an aged lady, says, that in the coldest of the weather, the little fellow could be seen trudging along through the snow with his sled, to join Deacon True's boys, and others, in the exciting but toilsome sport of sliding down hill.

At times the snow covered up the fences, and left nothing to intercept his descent from the top of the hill to the current of the Merrimack. So intent was his mind on this sport, and so regardless of the coldness of the weather on one occasion, that the toes of both his feet were frozen, and he was compelled to suffer the privations of being confined to the house, too lame to walk. He used to say " there was great fun in sliding down hill, but there was not much fun

in hearing his father scold when he stayed out of school to enjoy it."

I went also to the pond where in the summer-time he used to bathe, where he learned the art of swimming, and where, in the winter-time, the water being frozen, he indulged in skating. No one of his years could excel him in either art. These were both invigorating exercises, and not only afforded him great amusement, but trained his physical energies for subsequent labor, which, without it, would have broke down many a more robust frame.

He had a passion for fishing, and it was perhaps as strong in him naturally as it was in old Izaak Walton. I went, to-day, to see the four brooks in which he indulged this propensity whenever he had an opportunity. The name of one is *Punch Brook*, of which I spoke in a former letter, of another *Middle Brook*, of another *Stirrup Iron Brook*, of the fourth *Wigwag Brook*. They were all very near. In days of yore, these brooks were famous for trout fishing, and he knew every hole, every lurking-place, in which these speckled beauties were found, between their entrance into the river, and the fountains whence they flowed. With his rude fishing-rod cut from the bushes, his lines made of horse-hair, than which no better have since been contrived, and his hooks bought of pedlers, as soon as dismissed from school, or released from the task his father gave him to perform, he went to trace those streams, and it was rare indeed that he ever returned without being heavily laden with the trophies of his skill and patience.

His skill in shooting, which in subsequent life has

rendered him famous as a good shot, was early acquired, and all along this valley, up the glens and on the mountain sides, he delighted to roam, with his dog and gun, in pursuit of game. Tradition points out several places where his eminent skill was displayed, and although it is not said of him, as it was of the famous shot, Captain Scott, viz., that all the raccoons and squirrels on seeing *him* in pursuit of them, invariably told the Captain that he need not take the trouble to fire at them, for they were as good as dead, and would come down to meet him at the foot of each tree, yet enough is said to prove that those animals might have told Mr. Webster a similar tale. He never missed them.

His father was very strict in all religious observances, and required, among other things, that his son should go every Sunday to Church, though the distance was about four miles. Mr. Webster complained of the hardship, for he must needs walk all the way. His father said to him :

“I see Deacon True’s boys there every Sunday regularly, and have never heard of their complaining.”

“Ah! but,” said Daniel, “Deacon True’s boys live half the way there, and, of course, have only half as far to walk.”

“Well,” said his father, “you may get up in the morning, dress yourself, and run up to Deacon True’s, and go with them; then you will have no farther to walk than they do.”

The logic of his father was conclusive; for he never considered it a hardship to be permitted to run up to Deacon True’s, to play with his boys, and that

the hardships, if any, lay beyond the Deacon's residence. On every good old New England Sabbath, therefore, when the weather would permit him, Mr. Webster was found at church, notwithstanding the distance.

Mr. Webster himself told me the following anecdote of a bit of fun. When he was about ten years of age, as a great favor his mother gave him half a dollar and permission to visit one of his aunts, distant some ten miles beyond this place. Accordingly he set forth the next morning early, and made the journey on foot. His purpose was to spend several days. On arriving at his place of destination, the first important object that arrested his attention was a splendid fighting-cock, strutting and crowing in the barn-yard. He scanned his apparent powers with secret but delightful anticipations, for one of his neighbors had a conquering rooster, against which he held a grudge, and which was the terror of every cock in this vicinity. As soon as he had passed the usual salutations with his aunt, who was of course delighted to see him, he began to negotiate for the purchase of the game-cock. It resulted in his becoming the owner of the bird for the said half dollar, all he had, which he promptly paid. During the night his anticipations and his impatience for morning to come were so great he could scarcely sleep a wink, tired as he was. At an early hour he was up and had his game-cock safely in his possession. No entreaties on the part of his aunt could induce him to stay a moment after he had had his breakfast.

With the rooster in his arms, he set out for home.

On his return, he had not proceeded far before he passed a barn-yard filled with hens, among which, he spied a cock manifesting his fighting propensities. On seeing what he held in his arms, the cock on his own ground, gave the usual challenge for a battle. No sooner intimated than done, down went this champion in the midst of the flock, and the sparring commenced. The battle was bravely fought on both sides. No lovers of cock-fighting ever saw a more satisfactory contest. But the challenging party bit the dust.

My game cock, said he, stood over his prostrate foe, and flapping his wings, crowed his victory. Thereupon he took his hero in his arms and again trudged on his way. In the course of the next mile he came to another yard. Here he displayed his champion, he was challenged, gave battle, and came off victorious as before, and came near having a battle with another boy of his age. Thus he journeyed on, giving battle at every barn-yard he passed where a cock would fight, always triumphant. At length he reached the yard of his neighbor who owned the cock against which he had the grudge. The day was well-nigh spent. His rooster had fought several times. He doubted the policy of letting him fight the most important battle under such circumstances, but being impatient, and seeing that his hero seemed fresh, for he had carried him in his arms, and inasmuch, as on seeing his antagonist, he seemed fierce for the fight, he let him slip.

The battle began. For a while the contest was an even one; but in ten minutes he had the satisfac-

tion of seeing his hero victorious. He also saw the cock against which he had the grudge and which had again and again driven his own fowls from his own yard, led about by the comb in a manner as degrading as the old Romans led their conquered foes while celebrating their triumphs of arms. Wellington, after the battle of Waterloo, was not better satisfied with the results of the day than he was with the results of his day.

On the left hand going towards the more settled part of the town of Salisbury, known as the Northern Road, on Punch Brook, stands an old saw mill, where Mr. Webster's father, more than sixty years ago, built himself a rude-looking mill. The place is a dark glen, and was then surrounded by a majestic forest, which covered the neighboring hills. The mill was a source of income to Colonel Webster, and he kept it in operation till near the end of his life. To that mill, Mr. Webster, though a small boy, went frequently, when not in school, to assist his father in sawing boards. He was apt in learning anything useful, and soon became so expert in doing everything required, that his services as an assistant were valuable. Hence, the reason for his being employed there when not absolutely required elsewhere. But his time was not misspent or misapplied. After "setting the saw" and "hoisting the gate," and while the saw was passing through the log, which usually occupied from ten to fifteen minutes for each board, Daniel was reading attentively some book he was permitted to take from the house. He had a passion thus early for reading histories and biographies.

There (let it be mentioned to his credit), in that old saw mill, surrounded by forests, in the midst of the great noise which such a mill makes, and this, too, without materially neglecting his task, he made himself familiar with the most remarkable events recorded by the pen of history, and with the lives and characters of the most celebrated persons who had lived in the tides of time. He has never forgotten what he read there. So tenacious is his memory, that he can recite long passages from the old books which he read there, and has scarcely looked at since. The solitude of the scene, the absence of everything to divert his attention, the simplicity of his occupation, the taciturn and thoughtful manner of his father, all favored the process of transplanting every idea found in those books to his own fresh, fruitful and vigorous mind. I have not made a visit to any of the scenes of Mr. Webster's boyhood, more interesting than this old mill. The Academy of Science, his *alma mater*, is not invested with more interest; no, not half so much.

Mr. Webster related to me the following interesting anecdote which had some influence on his after life.

After the Constitution of the United States had been adopted by all the States of the Union, and had gone into operation, of course its good results were apparent, and the people began to read and venerate it. It was printed in all forms and widely circulated. But the first time that he saw it, he found it printed at length on some fine cotton handkerchiefs for sale at a neighboring store. He paid all the money in his

purse for one handkerchief, and carried it home. On the same afternoon he sat under the shade of the old elm tree, near his father's house, and read and re-read that wonderful work of man. Considering the fact that to him more than to any other man, living or dead, is due the credit of being its ablest, its most zealous, and most constant defender, is there not much importance attached to the place where Mr. Webster first read the Constitution?

As I was to-day standing on the identical spot, I could see him in my mind's eye. There he sat, beneath the wide-spreading branches of that old tree, on a rude bench, with the handkerchief spread out in his lap, poring over its wisdom, drinking in ideas which for more than half a century have been shining lights, guiding the footpaths of his countrymen through paths beset with perils, of which the history of the world furnishes no parallels. Fortunate incident!

I take the following anecdote from the letter to which I have before alluded and given to me for this purpose.

"Of a hot day in July—it must have been one of the last years of Washington's administration, I was making hay with my father, just where I now see a remaining elm-tree, about the middle of the afternoon. The Hon. Abiel Foster, M. C., who lived in Canterbury, six miles off, called at the house, and came into the field to see my father. He was a worthy man, college learned, and had been a minister, but was not a person of any considerable natural powers. My father was his friend and supporter.

He talked awhile in the field and went on his way. When he was gone, my father called me to him, and we sat down beneath the elm, on a haycock. He said, 'My son that is a worthy man—he is a member of Congress—he goes to Philadelphia, and gets six dollars a day, while I toil here. It is because he had an education, which I never had. If I had had his early education I should have been in Philadelphia in his place. I came near it, as it was. But I missed it, and now I must work here.' 'My dear father,' said I, 'you shall not work. Brother and I will work for you, and wear our hands out, and you shall rest'—and I remember to have cried,—and I cry now, at the recollection. 'My child,' said he, 'it is of no importance to me—I now live but for my children; I could not give your elder brother the advantages of knowledge, but I can do something for you. Exert yourself—improve your opportunities—*learn—learn*—and when I am gone, you will not need to go through the hardships which I have undergone, and which have made me an old man before my time."

Yours truly,

THOS. W. THOMPSON—LAW-OFFICE—LATIN GRAMMAR—REASONS
FOR GOING TO AN ACADEMY—GOES TO EXETER—DR. ABBOTT.

ELMS FARM, N. H., September, 1849.

In the year 1791, there came to reside in this town a young lawyer by the name of Thomas W. Thompson, who opened an office a short distance from this,

and boarded with Col. Webster's family. I will tell you more about this gentleman in another letter.

In 1795, Mr. Thompson, having no students or clerks, and being often away on business, induced Daniel to stay in his office while he was absent, to tell his clients, and those who called, where he had gone and when he would be home. He was then in his thirteenth year. Mr. Thompson gave him a Latin grammar, which he committed to memory. He had no object in learning it except to gratify Mr. Thompson. He had never dreamed of studying Latin or Greek, or of going to college, nor had his father thought of any such thing. Daniel expected to follow in the footsteps of his father and elder brothers, to cultivate the soil, and, while a boy, to obtain what was termed a good common school education, that he might be respected as a man. Nobody had yet discovered the giant intellect God had bestowed upon him, unless, perhaps, his devoted mother. But the facility with which he learned the Latin Grammar, and the tenacity of his memory, arrested the attention of Mr. Thompson, who spoke of it to Col. Webster. In the Spring of 1796, the idea of sending him to an academy to qualify him to be a *school teacher*, was entertained by his father. Mr. Thompson advised it, and his mother *urged* it. His brother Joseph, who had arrived at the age of manhood, favored his going, by way of the joke which I related to you in a previous letter. He said, inasmuch as Daniel was not as smart by nature as the other members of the family, he hoped his father would send him to an academy, so that with the advantages it would give

him, he would be equal to his brothers and sisters; or, to use his own words, "know as much as the rest of them."

The fact that Daniel had what was regarded a slender constitution, was thrown into the scale to favor the idea of his going to school, to qualify himself for doing some less laborious work than that of the farm.

To send one of ten children away to an academy, perhaps at the expense of the others, was, in the eye of Col. Webster, a partiality. He hesitated in taking such a step, indeed, he doubted whether it would promote either Daniel's happiness or prosperity. There have been many instances in which fathers have reasoned thus. He could not of course foresee the great results that followed. But considering what was said by Mr. Thompson about his capacity for learning, and taking into account the young man's constitution, Col. Webster finally came to the conclusion that it would be well for Daniel to qualify himself as a schoolmaster. He could in that case work on the farm during the summer months, and in the cold winter season when his health would not permit him to work out of doors, he could teach a school. Other young men had done as much in this vicinity, and the experiment had proved profitable so far as the cost of them was concerned, and above all highly advantageous to the young men themselves. These considerations induced his prudent father to send him to the academy; ninety-nine of every hundred would have reasoned like him. Could the book of the future have been opened to him when he resolved to

place his son on the road to fame, how the vision would have stirred his heart! When his father's judgment was once convinced, he never drew back from his purposes. He was a just and excellent man.

On the 24th May, 1796, on a bright and sunny day, Mr. Webster set out for Phillips' Academy, in Exeter, in the County of Rockingham, in this State. He was a small boy for one of his age. At that time, there were few, if any, light carriages in this part of the State, and the roads, in all directions, were bad; most of the travelling, for any considerable distance, was done on horseback. One of the neighbors wished to send a horse and side-saddle to Exeter for a lady to ride to this place. He availed himself of this opportunity. Col. Webster mounted his own horse, and Daniel, dressed in his new homemade suit, mounted the horse with the side-saddle. They journeyed on slowly, down the Merrimack to the mouth of the Sun Cook River, and then up its valley to Allenstown, where they stayed the first night. Although the distance was not great, yet the little fellow, unaccustomed to riding far, was tired enough. The next day, refreshed by sleep, they set out again, and continued their journey as far as the town of Poplin, where they stayed the second night. Mr. Webster had never been so far from home before. The third day they reached their place of destination, long before night.

Although his father was born at Kingston, six miles distant, yet there were but two or three persons in Exeter whom he knew. One was a Mr. Cass, the father of his Excellency, Governor Cass. Another

was a Mr. Clifford. With the latter, Col. Webster procured a place for Daniel to board, so that he took his lodging there the third night. The next day, he went with his father to the academy to apply for admission. Benjamin Abbott, LL. D., was then at the head of the academy. He felt and carefully maintained the dignity and importance of his position. To him, of course, the application for admission was made. The learned Doctor, then a young man, was seated in the great hall. He always did every thing official with pompous ceremony.

"Well, sir," said he, putting on his cocked hat, "let the young gentleman be presented for examination."

Mr. Webster, with his hat in his hand, modestly advanced, and stood before him. He was in a strange place, and strangers were around him, but he was self-possessed. It is his nature to be self-possessed.

"What is your age?"

"Fourteen."

"Take this Bible, my lad, and read that chapter."

The chapter given him to read was 22d chapter, Gospel according to St. Luke. A description of the conspiring of the Jews, the betrayal of Christ by Judas, the denial by Peter, &c. Daniel took the book, and read in a clear tone, with due emphasis, as he had been taught by his father to read. He was equal to the occasion. He was able to concentrate his mind on the matter, and to control his manner. The Doctor listened with astonishment; and, as the young man before him proceeded, giving full effect to every word of that beautiful narration, he seemed in

a trance, and never interrupted him. He read to the end. Such a trial would have been severe for most boys, but in that exercise Daniel was perfectly at home. He shut up the book and handed it to Dr. Abbott, who asked him no more questions.

"Young man," said he, "you are qualified to enter this institution."

He had never before heard the chapter better read.

That school was founded in 1781, by one John Phillips, LL. D.; hence its name. He made it liberal donations; \$100,000 during his life, and at his death \$50,000 more: and it had already acquired a high reputation. It was regarded as the best literary and scientific institution in the State. In 1795, the year before Daniel went there, Dr. Phillips had died, bequeathing to it a large portion of his wealth. This raised it almost to the importance of a college. The building stood on a plain near the centre of the town, and it was well provided with accommodations for the different branches of instruction. Among other advantages it possessed was a large hall for declamation and the annual exhibitions. The institution was endowed with a salary for the Principal, and a salary for a Professorship besides. Phillips had made it independent.

This venerable man (Dr. Abbott) retired from the head of this institution in 1839, having presided over it for fifty years, and having, for a considerable time before his promotion to the place of Principal, been engaged in the humblest ranks of instruction. He has been, in fact, a schoolmaster of sixty years

standing. He has withdrawn to the repose of his family, after an amount of labor and usefulness which has no parallel among the teachers of this country. The endowment of this Academy, and the respectability of its corps of teachers, placed it on a par with not a few American Colleges; and it was for many years without a rival as a school of preparation for College. A thorough English education was furnished by it to those who were not seeking for classical attainments. Other schools and academies have since sprung up in various parts of the country, which may have diminished the relative importance of this, but without affecting the merits of the faithful men who have maintained its repute, and have given so useful an impulse to the general cause of public education.

Among the three thousand boys who have been also taught by Dr. Abbott, at that School, are Lewis Cass, Levi Woodbury, Alexander H. and Edward Everett, Jared Sparks, George Bancroft, Henry Ware, Jr., John G. Palfrey, John A. Dix, and Joseph S. Buckminster—all eminent men, who have made their mark on the time. The Doctor possessed, in a high degree, those personal qualifications of a teacher, which, in all countries, and under all systems of education, constitute the most important—the indispensable requisites for success. In these qualifications Dr. Abbott stands pre-eminent. He is a thorough classical scholar—an expert in all the branches which he assumes to teach. He has that self-knowledge which gave him a ready intuition of the modes of thought and the springs of action in other minds,

especially those of the young, upon whom he is exerting his influence.

No one is better versed than himself in that difficult subject, "the human nature of boys," the want of which knowledge has disabled so many eminent men (even in some of our Universities) from the efficient performance of the functions of a teacher.

It is said of him, by one who knew him well, that by this happy degree of self-knowledge, and consequent power of adjustment to the capacities and tendencies of youthful minds, Dr. Abbott was always able to engage their attention, and to communicate with facility the desired instruction; a practical art, for which the highest accomplishments, and the most earnest and praiseworthy diligence can never be substituted with due effect in producing the best fruits of education. The strict order and application to study, which mark the department of the efficient teacher, never failed to be visible under the administration of Dr. Abbott, who secured obedience and diligence by his sincerity and straightforwardness of purpose, dignity of manners and regularity of system; while his constant aim was to cultivate the better feelings of his pupils, to inspire them with self-respect and a love of truth, and to incite them to the pursuit of good learning for its own sake. Mr. Webster and those above-named, in common with all who wished to succeed, felt that no rules could be broken without detriment to themselves, even if there were a chance for impunity; and that, under so considerate, just, and kind a teacher, no requisitions would be imposed that were not designed for the general good.

Submission was thus rendered easy without being servile; and to offend was not only regarded as a breach of law, but of an honorable confidence reposed in them by one who was more grieved than offended at their faults, and whose highest satisfaction was in their progress and success.

Mr. Webster remained at that Academy only nine months. He gave his attention chiefly to the English branches, viz., grammar, arithmetic, geography, and rhetoric; but he incidentally pursued the study of the Latin language. His success in all was such as to excite the highest admiration of Mr. Abbott. Having discovered in the very outset the capacity of the young gentleman, he gave him full scope, and brought him forward as rapidly as he could. When Mr. Webster left that school, at the age of fourteen, he understood the English and the Latin languages.

He had responded to the weekly call for a composition in writing, "but he could not make a speech." On this subject he says of himself, in a short memoir of Joseph S. Buckminster: "My first lessons in Latin were directed by Joseph Stevens Buckminster, at that time an Assistant at the Academy. I made tolerable progress in all the branches I attended under his instruction, but there was one thing I could not do; I could not make a declamation—I could not speak before the school. The kind and excellent Buckminster especially sought to persuade me to perform the exercise of declamation, like other boys, but I could not do it. Many a piece did I commit to memory, and rehearse in my own room, over and over

again; but when the day came, when the school collected, when my name was called, and I saw all eyes turned upon my seat, I could not raise myself from it. Sometimes the masters frowned, sometimes they smiled. Mr. Buckminster always pressed and entreated with the most winning kindness, that I would only venture *once*; but I could not command sufficient resolution; and when the occasion was over, I went home and wept bitter tears of mortification."

Here, then, is a striking fact: the man who, during the first nine months at an Academy, though a good reader, and naturally self-possessed, could not deliver a speech! and yet, afterwards he became the greatest Orator of his time! Bashful boys, take courage.

Dr. Abbott still lives, and the proudest act of his life is his teaching that boy. He talks with enthusiasm of the exploits of his pupil, and Mr. Webster never fails to express his obligations to Mr. Abbott for the pains he took with his education during the brief period it was his happiness to be under his charge.

The following description of the retirement of the Doctor in 1839, you may have seen, but I will give it in connection with what I am writing. Having attained the age of seventy-seven years, and having filled the measure of his long and faithful services, Dr. Abbott announced his determination to resign his office at the conclusion of the summer term. This was to a large number of his pupils, to all whose health or business would permit their attendance, a signal for a spontaneous rally once more around their

venerable teacher and friend, to offer him a heartfelt tribute of gratitude and respect. His portrait, painted by Harding for this occasion, will faithfully transmit the lineaments of his countenance to after days.

The festival at Exeter, near the end of August in that year, surpassed in interest the previous bicentennial celebration of the founding of Harvard University, in 1836. The dining hall selected for the festival, was filled by a long procession of Dr. Abbott's former pupils, from all parts of the country, on more gladdened by the familiar salutation, and grown young again in the presence of their ancient instructor; renewing the friendships which time had interrupted; revisiting the homes of the hospitable inhabitants which had sheltered their early days; tracing once more the scenes of their boyish sports, and sadly bidding farewell to friends, whom most of them were to see no more.

Political and all other divisions were for the time forgotten, as they listened to the eloquent and appropriate addresses of Mr. Webster, E. Everett, and the other speakers whom the occasion inspired. All eyes were directed toward the man of the day. Dr. Abbott had prepared an address to the assembly. They clustered about him in breathless expectation. He arose to tender his acknowledgments and a parting benediction. The scenes and events of so many years came crowding upon his mind. His "boys" of days long gone by, were gathered in his presence with every demonstration of the warmest attachment. His eye fell upon those whom he had instructed, counselled, guided, and for whom his prayers had

so often ascended to the throne of mercy. Some had fallen asleep. Perhaps at that moment of intense emotion the image of his lamented son, taken from him in early life, might have passed before his mind, as it glanced from the present to the lost. Overcome by the conflict of his emotion, he faltered and paused. His utterance was choked, his eyes were filled with tears, and he sank into his seat, wholly unable to proceed—amid the sympathy, the enthusiasm, and the overwhelming applause of the whole concourse. It is difficult to describe a scene like this, more eloquent than words, and ineffaceable from the memory of all who were present. It was the index of an honest and true fame, more precious than the richest patri-mony to his surviving relatives.

It was among the most fortunate events of Mr. Webster's life that he had such a teacher in the outset.

Yours truly.

MR. WEBSTER TEACHES A SELECT SCHOOL—A FROLIC—REV. SAMUEL WOOD—PREPARES FOR COLLEGE—ENTERS DARTMOUTH.

ELMS FARM, N. H., Sept. —, 1849.

After the return of Mr. Webster from Exeter Academy in February, 1797, he was anxious to avail himself of the advantages his education gave him. He was rather young to teach a school, but he felt himself qualified for the task, and he sought an opportunity. William Wirt, Silas Wright, and an army of the first men in this country, and espe-

cially in this State, have pursued a similar course in their career. Three-fourths of all the students in New Hampshire teach school occasionally, either more or less. Among his associates, and persons of his own age, a class was formed for his teaching, which occupied an apartment in the house of his uncle, William Webster, on the North Road. It was for only a short time in the latter part of the winter. The class was composed of boys and girls. He gave them lessons to the utmost of their ability to learn, and he continued his own studies at the same time. But it was not "all work and no play." The teacher and the pupils had many a frolic together. I will relate one as a specimen. I give it to you as it was told to me to-day by one who was one of the party.

The whole class and the teacher were invited to the farm of Captain Sawyer, on which Mr. Webster was born, to eat apples and drink cider. That farm was famous for good apples and other fruit.

Entertainments of this kind were frequent among the farmers in Salisbury at that period, if not at this day. I dare say "apple peelings" are not yet discontinued.

They assembled in the school-room in the evening, a bright moonlight night, with fine sleighing; but there were no horses or sleighs as there are now, for carrying large parties. They had to resort to another expedient.

Daniel's uncle, William, had a fine yoke of four-year-old steers, well fed, and very fast walkers. He had also a large sled, with an ample box for a dozen

such passengers. This team was yoked to the sled, the box filled with straw, and all the party, bent on enjoying themselves, went "aboard," and a glorious frolic they had of it. Mr. Webster, though the school-master, was younger than many of the pupils. Their relative positions were temporarily suspended, and he held back nothing that he could do or say to enrich the hilarity of the occasion. The events of that joyful evening will never be forgotten by anybody who then lived here.

But Mr. Webster about this time made the acquaintance, and secured the lasting and ardent friendship of Rev. Samuel Wood, LL. D., of Boscawen (a place not far off), who was, for more than half a century, minister of the Gospel in that town, and justly distinguished for his learning and piety. I will tell you something about him. He graduated at Dartmouth College, and at the commencement, in 1779, he delivered the valedictory oration. Speaking of the interruption to the progress of education which the Revolution had occasioned, he spoke his sentiments on the subject of education:

"How sad," said he, "are the consequences when a people unite to neglect the propagation of education, not to mention the many instances of the kind recorded in history; our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, and our fathers have told us, how education exalted the land of their nativity! But, alas! those halcyon days are over and gone; and we feel the dire effects. Else what meaneth this din of war in our land, with garments rolled in blood,—this train of Britain's artillery put in array against us? Those

lightnings that flash from her brazen batteries, and the thunders that break from those smoky columns with storms pregnant with leaden hail, promiscuous instruments of death."

He was more than a clergyman sometimes is; he was a benefactor, a patron of learning, and a dispenser of the blessings of education. I cannot speak too highly of him. His whole time and all the means at his disposal were devoted to the happiness and prosperity of the youth within his reach. He believed in and acted on the principle, that the greatest good man can do his fellow-man is to make him happy. He believed happiness attended learning. His soul knew no bounds.

His arms were open to every young man who was striving for an education. Every one, when known, was invited to share his hospitality and to receive his instruction. It made no difference to that good man whether he did or did not receive remuneration. It is said that great numbers of young men have received his tuition, many of whom have lived in his house gratuitously. He has personally instructed 155 pupils in his own house. Of this number, 105 entered college, from 40 to 50 entered the ministry, 20 the profession of the law, and 6 or 7 that of medicine. His pupils were his only pride; he beheld among them Governors, and Councillors of State, Judges, and Members of Congress. But few towns, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, have educated more young men than this; some of whom take their rank among the first advocates, not only in this State, but in the United States. Their names are

as follows: Moses Eastman, 1794; Moses Sawyer, 1799; Daniel Webster, 1801; Ezekiel Webster, Ebenezer O. Fifield, 1803; Thomas H. Pettingill, 1804; Nathaniel Sawyer, 1805; John True, 1806; Ichabod Bartlett, Valentine Little, 1808; James Bartlett, Benjamin Pettingill, 1812; Joseph Wardwell, 1813; Charles B. Hadduck, 1816; Benjamin Huntoon, 1817; William T. Hadduck, 1819; Joseph B. Eastman, 1821. They all graduated at Dartmouth College, with one exception. The Salisbury Social Library consists of between three and four hundred volumes, and annual additions are made to it.

He saw the mighty talents that gleamed in young Mr. Webster, and at once resolved in his own mind that such extraordinary gifts must not, should not, remain in obscurity. At the time Mr. Webster made his acquaintance, Mr. Wood was one of the trustees of Dartmouth College, and was on intimate terms with the faculty; he therefore exerted himself to get him into that institution. He was often at his house and at his table; he talked with that great Dr. of Divinity, and in his presence, with his students who were preparing for college.

No young man was ever more modest or unpretending than Mr. Webster; he had not then dreamed of so great an enterprise, so great an advantage, as going through that or any other university. In his mind, the thing was as much beyond his reach as the sky over his head. He had no vaulting ambition, nor discontentment with his position, but he loved learning and the society of learned men. Whatever came before him he eagerly devoured. No topic of

interest could be suggested which he was willing to relinquish till he knew all about it—its length, breadth, weight and depth. This was the natural bent of his mind. Mr. Webster and his father had conversed on the subject, and Ezekiel had been taking a part in the conversation, but, on the whole, the two young men thought it too much to be undertaken by them.

Accustomed as Dr. Wood was to measure the capacity of young men, and to estimate their relative strength, he did not fail to see, what his countrymen and the whole world wherever civilization had gone, has since seen and is daily seeing, viz., the superiority of his intellect.

This reverend gentleman, and Mr. Abbott of the Exeter Academy, were intimate friends. Both had discovered the promising talents of young Mr. Webster, and both were anxious that he should proceed in his career, which they foresaw led to eminence. With the testimony borne by Mr. Abbott, Mr. Wood went to Col. Webster, told him their opinions, and recommended him to send Mr. Webster to college. His father took the matter into consideration, and finally resolved to do what was recommended by such high authority. Mr. Wood proposed to attend to his preparatory studies.

In a narrow and quite secluded road which leads from this valley near the mouth of Stirrup Iron Brook, towards the residence of Mr. Wood, as Mr. Webster was driving with his father in a small sleigh called a "pung," he was told for the first time he was to be sent to college. The announcement startled him, but he eagerly assented. In a moment the

mighty mountain he had to climb rose before his imagination, but "he screwed up his courage to the sticking place," and boldly commenced the ascent, and never turned back till he had reached, as you have seen, the pinnacle of fame. I drove over the place to-day, with one familiar with the circumstances I have related, and I could not but feel that a deep interest attached itself to the spot where his destiny and where the current of his thoughts were so completely changed by so important an announcement.

I have heard Mr. Webster relate the story, and describe the various sensations he felt. At one moment he laid his head on his father's bosom and wept. At another moment he felt as much pride and exultation as ever was felt by a Roman Consul to whom a triumph had been decreed.

He commenced his preparation for College. It must be borne in mind he had been only nine months at the Academy. As late as the month of June he had never opened a Greek Grammar for studying, and yet he was to enter Dartmouth in August! A short time, indeed. Mr. Wood had a class of young men then fitting themselves for the same purpose. They were reviewing Cicero's Orations. Mr. Webster had never read one of them. He entered the same class, and opening the book at the pages they were reviewing, he read them fluently and understandingly, as it were by intuition. Their language seemed to be his own language. He could think in the same strain; and he has been heard to say that no task was ever so easily accomplished as his reading Cicero. But not so with Greek. He did not like the language, and

would never take the trouble to understand it any farther than was absolutely required by his Professor. It was not because he could not learn that or any other language with facility, but he did not fancy it, and never tried to make himself a good Greek scholar. The English and Latin he thought sufficient for his purposes. Had he intended to be a Greek Professor, he would have thought otherwise and done otherwise.

Mr. Webster has often related the following anecdote, which is well told by Professor Sanborn, whose words I substitute for my own. His recreations then were the same which have occupied his leisure hours in later life. In his rambles among the neighboring woods, his rifle was his constant companion :

“ linoque solebat et hamo
Decipere, et calamo salientes ducere pisces.”

“ His kind mentor once ventured to suggest his fears lest young Daniel's example, in devoting so much time to his favorite amusements, might prove injurious to the other boys. He did not complain that his task was neglected, or that any lesson was imperfectly prepared. This suggestion was sufficient. The sensitive boy could not bear the suspicion of any dereliction of duty. The next night was devoted to study. No sleep visited his eyes. His teacher appeared in the morning to hear his recitation. He could read his hundred lines without mistake. He was nowhere found tripping in syntax or prosody. As his teacher was preparing to leave, young Daniel requested him to hear a few more lines. Another hundred was read. Breakfast was repeatedly an-

nounced. The good doctor was impatient to go, and asked his pupil how much further he could read. 'To the end of the twelfth book of the *Æneid*,' was the prompt reply. The doctor never had occasion to reprove him again. His study hours ever after were sacred. In less than a year, he read, with his teacher, Virgil and Cicero ; and, in private, two large works of Grotius and Puffendorf, written in Latin."

In the month of August, 1797, Mr. Wood proposed that Mr. Webster should enter college with the class that had been long preparing and had read all the books necessary to enable its members to enter with decided advantages. That good man went to the Faculty, personally, to recommend him, "not so much for what he had learned as for what he told them he could learn if he had an opportunity." He was then only fifteen years old, and his advantages, as you have seen, had not been great. But relying on the influence of Mr. Wood with the Faculty, as well as upon his ability to perform what he should promise, he made his arrangements to go, unprepared as he was, from the want of time and the absence of the requisite books.

A near neighbor, who was engaged in the domestic manufacture of clothes, with great dispatch fitted him out with a new suit of blue clothing—coat, vest and pantaloons—for the occasion of his first visit at Hanover and his examination.

When thus prepared, he set out on horseback. On his way he encountered a violent storm, which lasted two days, raised a flood, carried away bridges, delayed his arrival, made it necessary in one in-

stance for him to travel twenty miles farther than the usual distance, and near the end of his journey drenched him with rain.

When Mr. Webster arrived, the Faculty for his examination was in session, and his presence was required immediately. On going to his room he found that the soaking rain had started the color of his new suit, and that from head to foot, under clothing, skin and all, he was as blue as an indigo-bag. No time was to be lost. He improved his plight all he could, yet, blue as he was, he presented himself before his examiners, that they might determine his qualifications to enter their institution.

Professor Shurtliff, now one of the Faculty, entered that College at the same time, and has often told the story of his first meeting Mr. Webster. He says:

"When I came to enter this Institution in 1797, I put up, with others from the same Academy, at what is now called the *Olcott House*, which was then a tavern. We were conducted to a chamber, where we might brush our clothes and make ready for examination. A young man, a stranger to us all, was soon ushered into the room. Similarity of object rendered the ordinary forms of introduction needless. We learned that his name was Webster, also where he had studied, and how much Latin and Greek he had read, which I think was just to the limit prescribed by law at that period, and which was very much below the present requisition."

When Mr. Webster appeared before the Faculty, he, in good-humor has said of himself, he "was not

only *black* Dan but *blue* Dan." However, with self-possession and great tact, he narrated what time he had occupied, what books he had read, and what opportunities he had improved for study, and especially the mishaps that had befallen him on the way there. "Thus you see me," said he, "as I am, if not entitled to your approbation, at least to your sympathy." He answered the questions addressed to him without embarrassment and to his best ability. With the aid of the Rev. Mr. Wood's influence, he passed what he looked to as a fiery ordeal, and entered on his career at College as a member of the Freshmen class. A fortunate day for Dartmouth College.

Hon. John Wheelock, LL. D., was then the President. Hon. Bezaleel Woodward and Rev. John Smith, D. D., were among the eminent Professors. Mr. Webster was there, as I have shown you, more through the influence of Dr. Wood than because he was thoroughly prepared. He had not read the books which were set down among the requisites for admission. From the month of March to the month of August, under the direction of Mr. Wood, he had looked into some of them—as many as he could in so short a time—but others he had not even opened.

He was not, therefore, prepared to compete with, much less to excel, the older and more thoroughly prepared members of his class. Had he occupied a year more in his preparatory studies, he would have stood on a par with any of them in all the branches of learning to which their attention was at any time called. As it was, he stood at the foot of his class in the beginning, and was compelled to delve into new

books, the outsides of which he had never before seen, to keep pace with his fellows, while some of his classmates were only leisurely reviewing what they had before read. This was a disadvantage which he always felt, and often spoke of in his after life.

Professor Sanborn asks the following question: What one of those College idlers, who talk so flip-pantly about the idleness of Daniel Webster, when a student, had prepared himself for a like station in two short months? The students of that day were deprived of many of the comforts and luxuries of life which are now so liberally enjoyed. This learned Professor also says Mr. Webster at once took the position in it which he has since held in the intellectual world. By the unanimous consent, both of teachers and classmates, he stood at the head of his associates in study; and was as far above them then, in all that constitutes human greatness, as he is now.

At that time, the studies of the Freshmen's class, the first year, were the Greek and Latin languages, the rules for speaking and composition, and the elements of mathematics. Since that day, the number and character of the text or class books required to be studied, I am told, have gradually increased with the progress of public improvement. In the study of the Latin language, and in the rules of speaking and composition, he was perfectly at home. His Virgil and Cicero were, to him, charmed volumes. He read them more for the pleasure they afforded, than as a task imposed on a school-boy. They constituted a theme for his eloquence when speaking to his College fellows, on every proper occasion.

The language in which those great men wrote, was to him a brilliant transparency, through which he could see their thoughts as others see physical objects; and his young but searching mind revelled among those thoughts as with congenial spirits. The Latin Dictionary and Grammar were in his memory, and the rapidity with which he soon read all the Latin authors, terse and good, marked him as a prodigy. So it was with the rules of speaking and composition. His translations of the Latin authors as he read them, and his essays in writing, submitted for examination, enabled him to reduce to practice what those rules taught him in theory. There was a charm about speaking and writing which had enchanted him during the short time he was at Exeter. Although, at that time, he was too modest or too timid to stand out before the spectators, and deliver a speech, as I told you in a former letter, yet he felt, and he frequently says, that if he had a desire, with respect to the future, at that early stage of his career, it was to write as Virgil and Tacitus wrote, to speak as Cicero spoke. This he knew he could not do, unless he could *think* like them. In the very outset, having made himself master of the rules of speaking and composition, as far as the best authors could instruct him; having acquired, also, the graces of oratory; and, being by nature self-possessed, he never mounted the rostrum without commanding attention. There was a dignity in his manner, a grace in his delivery, with courteous deference to all present, that never failed, even then, to raise admirers. That large forehead, and those dark, penetrating eyes you have so

often seen, were as visible then as now. No judge of men could look at him, and not say God made him extraordinary. Every student in that College acknowledged and deferred to his great talents. The whole Faculty, too, sanctioned by their words, their actions, and the respect they paid him, the opinion which the students entertained.

Professor Shurtliff, one of his classmates, also speaks of him as follows :

“ Mr. Webster, while in College, was remarkable for his steady habits, his intense application to study, and his punctual attendance upon all the prescribed exercises. I know not that he was absent from a recitation, or from morning and evening prayers in the Chapel, or from public worship on the Sabbath ; and I doubt if ever a smile was seen upon his face during any religious exercise. He was always in his place, and with a decorum suited to it. He had no collision with any one, nor appeared to enter into the concerns of others, but emphatically *mind*ed his own business.

“ But as steady as the sun, he pursued with intense application the great object for which he came to College. This I conceive was the secret of his popularity in College, and his success in subsequent life.”

The venerable Judge Woodward, the Professor of Natural Philosophy, (who died shortly after Mr. Webster left College,) often spoke of him in high terms. Said he,—“ *That man's victory is certain who reaches the heart through the medium of the understanding. He (Mr. Webster) gained me by*

combating my opinions, for I often attacked him merely to try his strength."

That learned and aged Professor, when he first made Mr. Webster's acquaintance, predicted his future eminence, and took infinite pleasure in assisting to lay the foundation stones of what he felt was to be a magnificent building. These circumstances, and these flattering indications, induced him to direct his steps early to the fields of oratory. From his conversations with well informed men, he obtained a knowledge of the manner of such men as Fisher Ames, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Patrick Henry, Alexander Hamilton, and other great men, who at that day were distinguished as orators. From journals and other sources, he acquired a knowledge of the style of Pitt, Burke, and others, eminent on the other side of the Atlantic. The first step towards emulating them, he conceived was, to ascertain who were truly eminent, and then, how they became so. As early as possible, he acquired this information; and then it was that he discovered that theory concerning eloquence, which he so graphically described years afterwards, in his eulogy on Adams and Jefferson. Hear him! You will never tire.

"True eloquence, indeed, does not consist in speech. It cannot be brought from far. Labor and learning may toil for it, but they will toil in vain. Words and phrases may be marshalled in every way, but they cannot compass it. It must exist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion. Affected passion, intense expression, the pomp of declamation, all may aspire after it, they cannot reach it. It

comes, if it comes at all, like the outbreking of a fountain from the earth, or the bursting forth of volcanic fires with spontaneous, original, native force. The graces taught in the schools, the costly ornaments and studied contrivances of speech, shock and disgust men when their own lives, and the fate of their wives, their children, and their country, hang on the decision of the hour ; then words have lost their power, and rhetoric is vain, and all the elaborate oratory contemptible. Even genius itself then feels rebuked and subdued,—as in the presence of higher qualities. Then patriotism is eloquent ; then self-devotion is eloquent. The clear conception outrunning the deductions of logic, the high purpose, the firm resolve, the dauntless spirit speaking on the tongue, beaming from the eye, informing every feature, and urging the whole man onward—right onward to his object—this, this is eloquence ; or rather, it is something greater and higher than all eloquence ; it is action, noble, sublime, godlike action.”

Acting on this theory, Mr. Webster conceived it was not enough for him to have a good voice, a fluent speech, accompanied with graceful gestures and a commanding person, to be eloquent, but he must, in reality, be *the man* ; he must have the *thought* ; he must be qualified by mental endowments and acquirements for all the occasions which might call forth eloquence, and then, and then only, could he be an eloquent man. Without these, he would be like a shining casket without its jewels.

It was one of the peculiar features of this college that after exacting the ordinary recitations or lessons

the minds of the students were allowed to follow the bent of their own inclinations. There was no uniformity of coats, caps, or *thoughts*; consequently each one could distinguish himself if he had the power, in other ways than by being prompt at prayers, prompt at recitations, and prompt in obeying all the little exactions which in other schools are too often the only merits recognised by the faculty, and the only basis on which claims to collegiate honors stand. Although Mr. Webster was careful to observe all the requirements, and was remarkable for his *punctuality* in every duty or engagement, yet he did not consider these qualifications as all that was desirable.

Mr. Webster was distinguished (says my informant) the first year for his great knowledge beyond the range of his daily lessons, and much more for his bold and independent manner of thinking and expressing his opinions on all subjects which came within the range of his reading or observation.

But, in the study of the Greek languages and mathematics, he did no more than was allotted him to do to keep along with his class. The bent of his mind was not in that direction.

During his second year at college he continued to study the Latin and Greek languages, reading new books, and also proceeded to the study of geography, logic, and the higher branches of mathematics, as prescribed by the rules of the College. Geography, ancient and modern, delighted him; and during that year he made great proficiency in this branch of his education. Logic was a study particularly suited to his taste and mind.

Professor Sanborn also relates the following anecdote:—After a residence of two years at college, he spent a vacation at home. He had tasted the sweets of literature, and enjoyed the victories of intellectual effort. He loved the scholar's life. He felt keenly for the condition of his brother Ezekiel, who was destined to remain on the farm, and labor to lift the mortgage from the old homestead, and furnish the means of his brother's support. Ezekiel was a farmer in spirit and in practice. He led his laborers in the field, as he afterwards led his class in Greek. Daniel knew and appreciated his superior intellectual endowments. He resolved that his brother should enjoy the same privileges with himself. That night the two brothers retired to bed, but not to sleep. They discoursed of their prospects. Daniel utterly refused to enjoy the fruit of his brother's labor any longer. They were united in sympathy and affection, and they must be united in their pursuits. But how could they leave their beloved parents, in age and solitude, with no protector? They talked and wept, and wept and talked till dawn of day. They dared not broach the matter to their father. Finally, Daniel resolved to be the orator upon the occasion. Judge Webster was then somewhat burdened with debts. He was advanced in age, and had set his heart upon having Ezekiel as his helper. The very thought of separation from both his sons was painful to him. When the proposition was made, he felt as did the Patriarch of old, when he exclaimed, "Joseph is not * * *, and will ye also take Benjamin away?" A family council was called. The mother's opinion was asked. She

was a strong-minded woman. She was not blind to the superior endowments of her sons. With all a mother's partiality, however, she did not over-estimate their powers. She decided the matter at once. Her reply was: "I have lived long in the world, and have been happy in my children. If Daniel and Ezekiel will promise to take care of me in my old age, I will consent to the sale of all our property at once, and they may enjoy the benefit of that which remains after our debts are paid." This was a moment of intense interest to all the parties. Parents and children all mingled their tears together, and sobbed aloud, at the thought of separation. The father yielded to the entreaties of the sons and the advice of his wife. Daniel returned to college, and Ezekiel took his little bundle in his hand, and sought on foot the scene of his preparatory studies. In one year he joined his younger brother in college.

In the third year, besides the languages, Daniel read Natural and Moral Philosophy and Rhetoric. Besides the lessons daily learned by his class and himself, he read with intense satisfaction, "Watts on the Mind," and "Locke on the Understanding;" he committed them to memory. When he came to these great lights, he began to see more clearly than ever the nature of the mind, and proceeded to the vigorous discipline of his own powers of analysis; so that, ere the Faculty were aware of it, they had a Logician in their presence, whose skill in argument and deep penetration baffled all their learning and experience.

Mr. Webster was now in his seventeenth year.

His manly character, his dignified deportment, and his acknowledged abilities had become well known. The patriotic citizens of Hanover, old and young, in College, and out of it, united in an invitation to him, to deliver an oration on the 4th of July. This he accepted, although the time for preparation was short. The ringing of bells, and the thundering cannon ushered in the day. The ceremonies were conducted with great pomp and solemnity. The concourse of people was large. Anthems were sung. The glorious declaration itself was read; and then, he came forward, and with all the graces of oratory, delivered the oration for the occasion. I have taken great pains to get a copy of it. One of his classmates has preserved it in a pamphlet, on the title-page of which I find the following:

AN ORATION

Pronounced at Hanover, New Hampshire, the 4th of July,
1800, being the Twenty-Fourth Anniversary of
American Independence.

BY DANIEL WEBSTER,
Member of the Junior Class, Dart. University.

“Do thou, great Liberty, inspire our souls,
And make our lives in thy possession happy,
Or our deaths glorious in thy just defence.”—Addison.

Published by request of the Subscribers.

Printed at Hanover,
BY MOSES DAVIS.

1800.

ORATION.

Countrymen, Brethren, and Fathers: We are now assembled to celebrate an anniversary, ever to be

held in dear remembrance by the sons of freedom. Nothing less than the birth of a nation—nothing less than the emancipation of three millions of people from the degrading chains of foreign dominion, is the event we commemorate.

Twenty four years have this day elapsed since these United States first raised the standard of Liberty, and echoed the shouts of Independence!

Those of you, who were then reaping the iron harvest of the martial field, whose bosoms then palpitated for the honor of America, will, at this time, experience a renewal of all that fervent patriotism; of all those indescribable emotions which then agitated your breasts. As for us, who were either then unborn, or not far enough advanced beyond the threshold of existence, to engage in the grand conflict for Liberty, we now most cordially unite with you, to greet the return of this joyous anniversary, to welcome the return of the day that gave us Freedom, and to hail the rising glories of our country!

On occasions like this, you have hitherto been addressed, from the stage, on the nature, the origin, the expediency of civil government.

The field of political speculation has here been explored by persons possessing talents to which the speaker of the day can have no pretensions. Declining, therefore, a dissertation on the principles of civil polity, you will indulge me in slightly sketching those events which have originated, nurtured and raised to its present grandeur this new empire.

As no nation on the globe can rival us in the rapidity of our growth since the conclusion of the Revo-

lutionary War, so none, perhaps, ever endured greater hardships and distresses than the people of this country previous to that period.

We behold a feeble band of colonists engaged in the arduous undertaking of a new settlement in the wilds of North America. Their civil liberty being mutilated, and the enjoyment of their religious sentiments denied them in the land that gave them birth, they fled their country, they braved the dangers of the then almost unnavigated ocean, and sought, on the other side of the globe, an asylum from the iron grasp of tyranny and the more intolerable scourge of ecclesiastical persecution.

But gloomy, indeed, was the prospect when arrived on this side the Atlantic.

Scattered in detachments along a coast immensely extensive, at a distance of more than three thousand miles from their friends on the eastern continent, they were exposed to all those evils, and encountered or experienced all those difficulties to which human nature seemed liable. Destitute of convenient habitations, the inclemencies of the seasons harassed them, the midnight beasts of prey prowled terribly around them, and the more portentous yell of savage fury incessantly assailed them. But the same undiminished confidence in Almighty God which prompted the first settlers of this country to forsake the unfriendly climes of Europe, still supported them under all their calamities, and inspired them with fortitude almost divine. Having a glorious issue to their labors now in prospect, they cheerfully endured the rigors of the climate, pursued the savage beast to his remotest

haunt, and stood, undismayed, in the dismal hour of Indian battle.

Scarcely were the infant settlements freed from those dangers which at first environed them, ere the clashing interests of France and Britain involved them anew in war. The Colonists were now destined to combat with well appointed, well disciplined troops from Europe ; and the horrors of the tomahawk and the scalping-knife were again renewed. But these frowns of fortune, distressing as they were, had been met without a sigh, and endured without a groan, had not Great Britain presumptuously arrogated to herself the glory of victories achieved by the bravery of American militia. Louisburg must be taken, Canada attacked, and a frontier of more than one thousand miles defended by untutored yeomanry, while the honor of every conquest must be ascribed to an English army.

But while Great Britain was thus tyrannically stripping her Colonies of their well earned laurels, and triumphantly weaving them into the stupendous wreath of her own martial glories, she was unwittingly teaching them to value themselves, and effectually to resist, on a future day, her unjust encroachments.

The pitiful tale of *taxation* now commences,—the unhappy quarrel, which resulted in the dismemberment of the British Empire, has here its origin.

England, now triumphant over the united powers of France and Spain, is determined to reduce to the condition of slaves, her American subjects.

We might now display the Legislatures of the several States, together with the General Congress, peti-

tioning, praying, remonstrating; and, like dutiful subjects, humbly laying their grievances before the throne. On the other hand, we could exhibit a British Parliament, assiduously devising means to subjugate America, disdaining our petitions; trampling on our rights; and menacingly telling us, in language not to be misunderstood, "*Ye shall be Slaves!*" We could mention the haughty, tyrannical, perfidious Gage, at the head of a standing army; we could show our brethren, attacked and slaughtered at Lexington! our property plundered and destroyed at Concord! Recollections can still pain us, with the spiral flames of burning Charlestown, the agonizing groans of aged parents, the shrieks of widows, orphans, and infants!

Indelibly impressed on our memories, still live the dismal scenes of Bunker's awful mount, the grand theatre of New England bravery; where *slaughter* stalked, grimly triumphant; where relentless Britain saw her soldiers, the unhappy instruments of despotism, fallen in heaps, beneath the nervous arm of injured freemen!

There the great Warren fought, and there, alas! he fell! Valuing life only as it enabled him to serve his country, he freely resigned himself, a willing martyr in the cause of Liberty, and now lies encircled in the arms of glory.

"Peace to the Patriot's shade—let no rude blast
Disturb the willow that nods o'er his tomb;
Let orphan tears bedew his sacred urn,
And fame's loud trump proclaim the hero's name,
Far as the circuit of the spheres extends."

But, haughty Albion, thy reign shall soon be over.

Thou shalt triumph no longer ; thine empire already reels and totters ; thy laurels even now begin to wither, and thy frame decay. Thou hast, at length, roused the indignation of an insulted people ; thine oppressions they deem no longer tolerable.

The 4th day of July, 1776, has now arrived, and America, manfully springing from the torturing fangs of the British Lion, now rises majestic in the pride of her sovereignty, and bids her Eagle elevate his wings !

The solemn Declaration of Independence is now pronounced, amidst crowds of admiring citizens, by the supreme council of our nation ; and received with the unbounded plaudits of a grateful people !

That was the hour when heroism was proved—when the souls of men were tried.

It was then, ye venerable patriots (speaking to the Revolutionary soldiers present), it was then you lifted the indignant arm, and unitedly swore to be free ! Despising such toys as subjugated empires, you then knew no middle fortune between liberty and death.

Firmly relying on the protection of Heaven, unworped in the resolution you had taken, you then, undaunted, met—engaged—defeated the gigantic power of Britain, and rose triumphant over the aggressions of your enemies.

Trenton, Princeton, Bennington, and Saratoga were the successive theatres of your victories, and the utmost bounds of creation are the limits of your fame ! The sacred fire of freedom, then enkindled in your breasts, shall be perpetuated through the

long descent of future ages, and burn, with undiminished fervor, in the bosoms of millions yet unborn.

Finally, to close the sanguinary conflict, to grant America the blessings of an honorable peace, and clothe her heroes with laurels, Cornwallis, at whose feet the kings and princes of Asia have since *thrown* their diadems, was compelled to submit to the sword of Washington.

The great drama is now completed: our Independence is now acknowledged; and the hopes of our enemies are blasted for ever; Columbia is now seated in the forum of Nations, and the Empires of the world are amazed at the bright effulgence of her glory.

Thus, friends and citizens, did the kind hand of overruling Providence conduct us, through toils, fatigues and dangers, to Independence and Peace. If piety be the rational exercise of the human soul, if religion be not a chimera, and if the vestiges of heavenly assistance are clearly traced in those events which mark the annals of our Nation, it becomes us, on this day, in consideration of the great things which have been done for us, to render the tribute of unfeigned thanks to that God, who superintends the universe, and holds aloft the scale, that weighs the destinies of Nations.

The conclusion of the Revolutionary War did not accomplish the entire achievements of our countrymen. Their military character was then, indeed, sufficiently established; but the time was coming which should prove their political sagacity—their ability to govern themselves.

No sooner was peace restored with England (the first grand article of which was the acknowledgment of our Independence), than the old system of Confederation, dictated, at first, by necessity, and adopted for the purposes of the moment, was found inadequate to the government of an extensive Empire. Under a full conviction of this, we then saw the people of these States engaged in a transaction which is undoubtedly the greatest approximation towards human perfection the political world ever yet witnessed, and which, perhaps, will for ever stand in the history of mankind without a parallel. A great Republic, composed of different States, whose interest in all respects could not be perfectly compatible, then came deliberately forward, discarded one system of government and adopted another, without the loss of one man's blood.

There is not a single Government now existing in Europe, which is not based in usurpation, and established, if established at all, by the sacrifice of thousands. But, in the adoption of our present system of jurisprudence, we see the powers necessary for Government voluntarily flowing from the people, their only proper origin, and directed to the public good, their only proper object.

With peculiar propriety, we may now felicitate ourselves on that happy form of mixed government under which we live. The advantages resulting to the citizens of the Union are utterly incalculable, and the day when it was received by a majority of the States shall stand on the catalogue of American

anniversaries second to none but the birthday of Independence.

In consequence of the adoption of our present system of Government, and the virtuous manner in which it has been administered by a Washington and an Adams, we are this day in the enjoyment of peace, while war devastates Europe! We can now sit down beneath the shadow of the olive, while her cities blaze, her streams run purple with blood, and her fields glitter with a forest of bayonets! The citizens of America can this day throng the temples of freedom, and renew their oaths of fealty to independence; while Holland, our once sister Republic, is erased from the catalogue of nations; while Venice is destroyed, Italy ravaged, and Switzerland—the once happy, the once united, the once flourishing Switzerland—lies bleeding at every pore!

No ambitious foe dares now invade our country. No standing army now endangers our liberty. Our Commerce, though subject in some degree to the depredations of the belligerent powers, is extended from pole to pole; our Navy, though just emerging from non-existence, shall soon vouch for the safety of our merchantmen, and bear the thunder of freedom around the ball. Fair science, too, holds her gentle empire amongst us, and almost innumerable altars are raised to her divinity, from Brunswick to Florida. Yale, Providence, and Harvard, now grace our land; and Dartmouth, towering majestic above the groves which encircle her, now inscribes her glory on the registers of fame! Oxford and Cambridge, those oriental stars of literature, shall now be outshone by

the bright sun of American science, which displays his broad circumference in uneclipsed radiance.

Pleasing, indeed, were it here to dilate on the future grandeur of America; but we forbear, and pause for a moment to drop the tear of affection over the graves of our departed warriors. Their names should be mentioned on every anniversary of Independence, that the youth of each successive generation may learn not to value life, when held in competition with their country's safety.

Wooster, Montgomery, and Mercer, fell bravely in battle, and their ashes are now entombed on the fields that witnessed their valor. Let their exertions in our country's cause be remembered, while liberty has an advocate and gratitude has place in the human heart.

Greene, the immortal hero of the Carolinas, has since gone down to the grave, loaded with honors, and high in the estimation of his countrymen. The courageous Putnam has long slept with his fathers; and Sullivan and Cilley, New Hampshire's veteran sons, are no more remembered with the living.

With hearts penetrated by unutterable grief, we are at length constrained to ask, where is our Washington? where the hero who led us to victory? where the man who gave us freedom? where is he, who headed our feeble army, when destruction threatened us, who came upon our enemies like the storms of winter, and scattered them like leaves before the Borean blast? Where, O! my country! is thy political saviour? Where, O! humanity! thy favorite son?

The solemnity of this assembly, the lamentations of the American people will answer, "Alas! he is now no more—the mighty is fallen!"

Yes, Americans, Washington is gone! he is now consigned to dust and sleeps in "dull, cold marble!"

The man who never felt a wound but when it pierced his country—who never groaned but when fair freedom bled—is now for ever silent!

Wrapped in the shroud of death, the dark dominions of the grave long since received him, and he rests in undisturbed repose! Vain were the attempt to express our loss—vain the attempt to describe the feelings of our souls! Though months have rolled away since his spirit left this terrestrial orb, and sought the shining worlds on high, yet the sad event is still remembered with increased sorrow. The hoary-headed patriot of '76 still tells the mournful story to the listening infant, till the loss of his country touches his heart, and patriotism fires his breast. The aged matron still laments the loss of the man, beneath whose banners her husband has fought, or her son has fallen. At the name of Washington, the sympathetic tear still glistens in the eye of every youthful hero. Nor does the tender sigh yet cease to heave in the fair bosom of Columbia's daughters.

Farewell, O Washington, a long farewell!
Thy Country's tears embalm thy memory;
Thy virtues challenge immortality;
Impressed on grateful hearts, thy name shall live,
Till dissolution's deluge drown the world.

Although we must feel the keenest sorrow at the

demise of our Washington, yet we console ourselves with the reflection that his virtuous compatriot, his worthy successor, the firm, the wise, the inflexible Adams, still survives. Elevated by the voice of his country, to the supreme executive magistracy, he constantly adheres to her essential interests, and with steady hand draws the disguising veil from the intrigues of foreign enemies and the plots of domestic foes.

Having the honor of America always in view, never fearing, when wisdom dictates, to stem the impetuous torrent of popular resentment, he stands amid the fluctuations of party and the explosions of faction, unmoved as Atlas,

“While storms and tempest thunder on its brow,
And oceans break their billows at its feet.”

Yet all the vigilance of our Executive, and all the wisdom of our Congress, have not been sufficient to prevent the country from being in some degree agitated by the convulsions of Europe. But why shall every quarrel on the other side of the Atlantic interest us in its issue? Why shall the rise or depression of every party there, produce here a corresponding vibration? Was this continent designed as a mere satellite to the other? Has not nature here wrought all operations on her broadest scale? Where are the Mississippis and the Amazons, the Alleghanies and the Andes of Europe, Asia and Africa? The natural superiority of America clearly indicates that it was designed to be inhabited by a nobler race of men, possessing a superior form of Government,

superior patriotism, superior talents, and superior virtues.

Let then the nations of the East vainly waste their strength in destroying each other.

Let them aspire at conquest, and contend for dominion, till their continent is deluged in blood. But let none, however elated by victory, however proud of triumph, ever presume to intrude on the neutral position assumed by our country.

Britain, twice humbled for her aggressions, has at length been taught to respect us. But France, once our ally, has dared to insult us! She has violated her treaty obligations—she has depredated our commerce—she has abused our Government, and riveted the chains of bondage on our unhappy fellow-citizens! Not content with ravaging and depopulating the fairest countries of Europe; not yet satiated with the contortions of expiring republics, the convulsive agonies of subjugated nations, and the groans of her own slaughtered citizens—she has spouted her fury across the Atlantic; and the stars and stripes of the United States have almost been attacked in our harbors! When we have demanded reparation, she has told us, “Give us your money and we will give you peace.” Mighty nation! Magnanimous Republic! Let her fill her coffers from those towns and cities which she has plundered, and grant peace, if she can, to the shades of those millions whose death she has caused.

But Columbia stoops not to tyrants; her spirit will never cringe to France; neither a supercilious, five-headed Directory, nor the gasconading pilgrim

of Egypt, will ever dictate terms to sovereign America. The thunder of our cannon shall insure the performance of our treaties, and fulminate destruction on Frenchmen, till the ocean is crimsoned with blood, and gorged with pirates!

It becomes us, on whom the defence of our country will ere long devolve, this day most seriously to reflect on the duties incumbent upon us.

Our ancestors bravely snatched expiring liberty from the grasp of Britain, whose touch is poison; shall we now consign it to France, whose embrace is death? We have seen our fathers, in the days of our country's trouble, assume the rough habiliments of war, and seek the hostile field. Too full of sorrow to speak, we have seen them wave a last farewell to a disconsolate, a woe-stung family. We have seen them return, worn down with fatigue, and scarred with wounds; or we have seen them, perhaps, no more. For us they fought—for us they bled—for us they conquered. Shall we, their descendants, now basely disgrace our lineage and pusillanimously disclaim the legacy bequeathed to us? Shall we pronounce the sad valediction to freedom and immortal liberty on the altars our fathers have raised to her? No! The response of the nation is, "No!" Let it be registered in the archives of Heaven. Ere the religion we profess, and the privileges we enjoy are sacrificed at the shrine of despots and damagogues—let the sons of Europe be vassals; let her hosts of nations be a vast congregation of slaves; but let us, who are this day free, whose hearts are yet unappalled, and whose right arms are yet nerved for war, assem-

ble before the hallowed temple of American freedom, and swear, to the God of our fathers, to preserve it secure, or die at its portals.

I think you will agree with me in saying that the boy who delivered that Oration was, to say the least, a clever boy. My informant says his friends were so much pleased with it, that they obtained a copy for publication. By this time, you may say, it is pretty "much out of print," but worthy of being reprinted. I dare say, Mr. Webster himself has entirely forgotten it. It shows his bosom was full of patriotism, and that in his youth the seeds of the noblest sentiments had taken deep root.

Yours truly.

MR. WEBSTER STILL AT COLLEGE—HIS STUDIES THE FOURTH YEAR—PERSONAL APPEARANCE—HIS EULOGY ON THE DEATH OF A CLASSMATE—COMMENCEMENT—HIS CLASSMATES—PERFORMANCE—HIS ORATION—HE IS MADE A BACHELOR OF ARTS—TAKES LEAVE.

ELMS FARM, N. H., Sept. --- 1849.

In the fourth and last year of Mr. Webster's college life his studies were Metaphysics and Natural and Political Law; his exercises were Compositions in English and Latin. These were according to the regulations established as the routine for the students.

In all the branches of education taught at Dartmouth during his sojourn there, unprepared as he was at the outset, Mr. Webster made himself a respect-

able student ; in point of fact, in all those that bore directly on the profession he had resolved to pursue, he made himself eminent.

That rare faculty which Mr. Webster possesses of putting the knowledge of other men into his own crucible, and thence obtaining the pure metal, was largely developed and cultivated while at college.

What his Professors knew he knew. The seed which fell from their ripe knowledge and experience dropped upon a rich soil, when he was a listener, and it lost nothing of its virtue in the process of reproduction.

* * * Yesterday, I had a pleasant interview with a lady, who was, as she says, "just entering her teens," and residing in Hanover when Mr. Webster was at Dartmouth. She remembers him well, although many years have passed. She "can tell exactly how he looked." She informs me that Mr. Webster was slender, and evidently had a feeble constitution. That he was a brunette in complexion ; that his hair was as black as jet, and when turned back, there was displayed a forehead, the sight of which always excited great admiration. His dark eyes shone with extraordinary brilliancy, and when engaged in agreeable or amusing conversation, he wore a smile that was bewitching, and showed teeth as white as pearls. He was a great favorite in the society at Hanover, which, though not gay, was refined and distinguished for its hospitality. She said that no young man in College was more highly esteemed by all classes, old and young, than Daniel Webster. She often heard him speak on public occasions ; and remembers his

"Fourth of July Oration," before the people of Hanover, and that it made a great sensation.

While Mr. Webster was there, one of the students, who was also a great favorite, died. Mr. Webster was chosen by his classmates to pronounce a eulogy on the occasion. The house was crowded to its utmost capacity, and she says: "The scene was solemn and quite affecting, for there was not a dry eye present."

His name was Ephraim Simonds, a member of the Senior Class of Dartmouth College, who died at Hanover, April 17, 1801.

I have not a copy of the whole funeral oration he delivered, but I will quote a passage from the exordium: "All of him that was mortal now lies in the charnels of yonder cemetery. By the grass that nods over the mounds of Sumner, Merrill and Cook, now rests a fourth son of Dartmouth, constituting another monument of man's mortality. The sun, as it sinks to the ocean, plays its departing beams on his tomb, but they reanimate him not. The cold sod presses on his bosom; his hands hang down in weakness. The bird of the evening shouts a melancholy air on the poplar, but her voice is stillness to his ears. While his pencil was drawing scenes of future felicity,—while his soul fluttered on the gay breezes of hope,—an unseen hand drew the curtain, and shut him from our view." Mr. Webster, at this time, had been so inspired with the brilliant and fervent style of President Wheelock, that he gave stronger indications of rising to eminence in poetry than in law or politics.

The lady with whom I conversed says that long

after Mr. Webster left college, other students, for their occasional declamations, spoke parts of that eulogy, and even then the hearers were often affected to tears. A schoolmate of Mr. Webster confirmed all this. I have heard the eulogy much praised. Its composition proved that Mr. Webster had an imagination and strength of fancy of the highest order. It was full of pathos; and was considered by the students, and the faculty too, as an extraordinary production,—indeed, the most splendid that ever was heard within the college walls. Those who have read his Eulogy on the death of the ex-Presidents Adams and Jefferson, will not be surprised to learn that he early manifested his wonderful capacity in this respect.

He was never wanting in originality. His imagination was of a high order. I have seen it stated that he wrote poetry, vigorous, manly poetry, whenever he chose. In his early productions there was a gorgeousness of youthful fancy, and oftentimes they were full of pathos. But the discipline to which he subjected his mind, incorporated the fire of the muse with the masses of law and politics he was forging for public use, so that on his first appearance after leaving college, all were astonished at his close, vigorous and mature style. While in college, there was published a paper, edited by the faculty and students, and no pen was more diligent or potent than that of Mr. Webster.

This excellent lady, to whom I am much indebted, was kind enough to grant me the perusal of several old papers and memorandums touching Dartmouth

College, which were preserved by her departed brother, a classmate, and from which I learn that Mr. Webster graduated during the last week in August, 1801. This was an important event in his career; and the incidents of that period interested me much, and I dare say they will you. Hanover, on this occasion, was full of people; the friends of the students in college, some from a great distance, and the lovers of learning from the neighboring counties were there, to derive pleasure from the public exercises and social festivities which the Annual Commencement of Dartmouth College always called forth.

The venerable and highly distinguished Professor Alexander, of Princeton, formerly of Virginia, in some notes he made of a journey through New England, where he passed the summer of 1801, says: "In passing from Massachusetts over the mountains of New Hampshire, I lodged within a few rods of the house of a farmer, the father of Hon. Daniel Webster. The old gentleman came over to the tavern in the morning, and chatted for half an hour. Among other things, he said that he had a son at Dartmouth, who was about to take his bachelor's degree. The father was large in frame, high-breasted and broad-shouldered, and, like his son, had heavy eyebrows. He was an affable man, of sound sense and considerable information, and expressed a wish that I might be acquainted with his son, of whom, it was easy to see that he was proud."

Dr. Alexander tells the following anecdote of Mr. Wheelock, the president, of whom I have before spoken :

"Arriving at Hanover, the seat of the college, a day or two before the commencement, I put up my horse, and secured a room at one of the two public houses. On the morning of the commencement I presented my letters to President Wheelock, and was received with a profusion of ceremonious inclinations; for it was pleasantly said that the president suffered no man to have the last bow. This, it was reported, was put to the test by a person of some assurance, who undertook to compete with him in the contest of politeness. He accordingly took his leave, bowed himself out of the mansion, and continued to bow as long as he was on the premises; but the president followed him to the gate, and remained in possession of the field. Dr. Wheelock was a man of learning, especially in the department of history. Such were the manners of the men at the head of the institution where Mr. Webster was educated.

The young gentlemen who graduated with Mr. Webster, and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts, were the following. I have often heard persons say they should like to know who his classmates were. I give their names:

Alpheus Baker,
James Henry Bingham,
Lemuel Bliss,
Daniel Campbell,
John Dutton,
William Farrar, -
Habyah Weld Fuller,
Charles Gilbert,
Elisha Hotchkiss,
Abner Howe,
Ebenezer Jones,

David Jewett,
Joseph Kimball,
Sanford Kingsbury,
Aaron Loveland,
Simeon Lyman,
Thomas Abbott Merrill,
Josiah Noyes,
John Nye,
Daniel Parker,
Nathaniel Shattuck,
Elisha Smith,

William Coit Smith,
Asahel Stone,
Matthew Taylor,

Caleb Jewett Tenney,
Samuel Upham,
Jabez B. Whitaker.

The degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred at the same time on a young clergyman by the name of Rev. Thomas Worcester.

The degree of Bachelor of Medicine was conferred at the same time on Sylvester Day, John March and Augustus Correy.

The degree of Master of Arts was then conferred on Messrs.

Ezekiel L. Bascom,
Stephen Bemis,
James Davis,
Phiny Dickinson,
Abel Farley,
Ebenezer Flint,
Alvan Foot,
Horace Hall,

William Lambert,
David Long,
Levi Pilsbery,
David Starrett,
Solon Stevens,
Jeremiah Stinson,
Josiah Webster,
James W. Woodward,

Phinehas Howe.

The following gentlemen, on the same occasion, received the degree of Master of Arts, out of the regular course, viz. : Messrs.

Kiah Bayley,
Silas Dinsmore,
Samuel Alden,
Jabez Munsill,

Joseph Powel,
Theophilus Packard,
Hiram Storrs,
Daniel Gilbert.

The same degree was conferred on Rev. Sylvester Dana and Jonathan Belden, from Yale College; Ignatius Thompson, from Rhode Island College; also, on Rev. Daniel Barber and William Morrison. The

degree of Doctor of Medicine was then conferred on Nathan Smith.

Speaking of the Commencement and of the exercises at the church on that day, Dr. Alexander says: "At the Dartmouth Commencement, Gen. Eaton, of eccentric memory, was marshal of the day, and was unceasing in busying himself about the order of the procession to the church; giving to each graduate, of every college, the place due to his seniority. Among the speakers was young Daniel Webster. Little dreaming of his future career in law, eloquence; and statesmanship, he pronounced a discourse on the recent discoveries in Chemistry, especially those of Lavoisier, then newly made public."

Among the number of young gentlemen above named, are several eminent men. Since that day they have made their mark on the time, many have departed, but some are living in the full enjoyment of their accumulating honors.

There were at that time, as there are now, several societies composed of the students, and other members of the College. The anniversaries of those societies, were held on the occasion of the commencement; and before each society, some member was chosen to make an address, preach a sermon, or deliver an oration. My informant tells me that to be selected for either of these duties was a mark of distinction higher and more appreciated than any other. None but those of acknowledged abilities and great attainments were even thought of, as candidates for such honors. The Faculty of the College awarded honors according to certain rules, which they had pre-

viously prescribed, and which were according to the usage of other Institutions; having regard to punctuality at prayers, and at recitations, and regarding the manner in which the student had observed all the little orders and regulations made for the government of the College, as well as to the improvement each one had made in all the studies pursued from the beginning to the end of the course. The exercises of the students began on Monday and ended on Wednesday. Monday and Tuesday were devoted to the proceedings of the societies. Mr. Bingham was chosen to speak before the "Musical Society," and his oration was on the "Harmony of Sounds."

Mr. Merrill was selected by the society of "Social Friends," and his oration was on the subject of "Fire."

A young clergyman, by the name of Rev. Elijah Parish, was chosen to preach a discourse before the "Literary Adelphi," and his text was, "He shall be called Wonderful."

The Rev. Eliphalet Gillet, preached a discourse before the "*Phi Beta Kappa*," from these words, "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life."

A Latin oration on "The Prosperity of America," with the salutatory addresses, were delivered by Mr. Thomas A. Merrill.

There was a forensic dispute on this subject: "Is the earth an oblate spheroid?" by Mr. Abner Howe and Mr. Daniel Parker.

A philosophical oration on the "Intellectual System," was delivered by Mr. Simeon Lyman.

A dialogue on "Algerine Piracy," by Mr. David

Jewett and Mr. Asahel Stone, was among the exercises.

A Hebrew oration, or an address on the "Fear of the Lord," was delivered by Mr. Nathaniel Shattuck. And there was an English oration on "Education," with the valedictory addresses, by Mr. Caleb J. Tenney, a young gentleman of fine talents, and the most punctual and ardent student in College.

But the most numerous, and, at that time, the most important society, was the one known as "The United Fraternity." This society unanimously designated Mr. Webster to deliver an oration before its members, and all classes were, of course, invited. The audience was large. The few occasions on which he had appeared before the public had already made him famous. His oration was on "The Influence of Opinion." I need not add that he acquitted himself well, for I have already told you enough to enable you to anticipate that fact. The fame of that oration was widely spread, and is not forgotten to this day by his schoolmates, with whom I have had the pleasure of conversing. One of the old papers I have read, modestly says:—"A numerous audience manifested a high degree of satisfaction at the genius displayed," and that "elegance of composition and propriety of delivery distinguished the performance."

On the 26th day of August, 1801, at 11½ o'clock, A. M., the Board of Trustees and Executive Authority, gentlemen of literary character, candidates for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts, and members of the Institution, walked in procession from the President's to the Meeting House. There the honors were con-

ferred, and Mr. Webster and his classmates took leave of each other and of the President, the professors and tutors of the College then separated, each one to pursue his own path for "weal or wo." No student ever left College with more blessings on his head. His future eminence was distinctly foretold by all the careful observers of men; and the result has excelled the most sanguine of his most partial friends.

Yours truly.

MR. WEBSTER IS THE PRINCIPAL OF THE FRYEBURG ACADEMY—HE
STUDIES LAW WITH THOMAS W. THOMPSON.

ELMS FARM, N. H., Sept. —, 1849.

In January, after Mr. Webster left college, he went to Fryeburg, in the State of Maine, to take charge of an academy, for which he was proposed or recommended by Rev. Dr. John Smith, Professor of Greek, Hebrew, and the Oriental languages. Whatever he said was high authority. This Dr. Smith (who was Mr. Webster's ardent friend,) published the New Hampshire Latin Grammar, "an edition of Cicero's Orations in Latin, with Notes," and a "Hebrew Grammar, designed to facilitate the study of the Scriptures." He was an eminent scholar. He, too, was one of those "*who taught that boy.*" As all feel an interest in knowing something about those who participated in shaping the mind of Mr. Webster, I say something of each of them as I proceed. His taking charge of this Academy was an important step

in climbing the hill of Fame. At Dartmouth College, it was a principle instilled into the mind of every student—and the same idea existed throughout the State—that there was no occupation, no profession, more honorable than that of instructing the youth of the country. All classes combined to weave chaplets for, and to award due honors to, the meritorious teacher of an academy or a school. None were permitted to attempt that business unless men of learning; so that under such circumstances, it was a high calling. The graduates at Dartmouth were early distinguished in this respect for the good they did, not only to the rising generation, but to themselves. I have just read a discourse on this subject, delivered by Nathaniel Bouton in 1833. Among other things he says:

“On the triple foundation of the learned languages, mathematics, and moral and intellectual philosophy, the sons of Dartmouth build high and enduring superstructions of personal fame and public usefulness. As citizens of New Hampshire, we owe much to the influence of this College, in elevating the character of our primary schools and academies, and in promoting education through our country. From its first establishment, about three-fourths of all the students have taught schools during some portion of each year. For five years past the average number of students has been one hundred and fifty-five, of whom one hundred and five have been teachers, ordinarily for a term of three months. Within the last two years the number of students has been one hundred and seventy; of whom *three-fourths* have

been teachers. More graduates from this College are now teaching," said he, "in New England, in the Southern States, and particularly in the valley of the Mississippi, than from any other College that is known."

An idea prevailed, that teaching was most salutary in its influence on the mind of the teacher. It aroused the recollections, and fixed on the memory more firmly, what the teacher had striven to learn. It enabled the graduate to see, by a little practice, where the web of his learning was most weak; and in the outset to remedy the defect. The most eminent men in New England, forty years ago, acted on this idea; and the result is, that this section of the United States is in advance of all others in solid education. New Hampshire is excelled only by Massachusetts and Connecticut; and those States are perhaps in advance of the rest of the world; that is, there are more educated men in proportion to the whole number of the people. Hearing of young Mr. Webster at Dartmouth, through Mr. Smith and others, the Trustees of the Fryeburg Academy, then recently founded, appointed him the principal of their Seminary, and he accepted the place. He never had occasion to regret it.

Fryeburg is a beautiful town in Oxford County, in the State of Maine. It consists of barren hills and fertile valleys. The intervening lands are of the richest kind. The hills are lofty and romantic. The principal village is situated on a plain, surrounded by those hills; and is watered by the river Saco. Although the township is but six miles square, yet,

that beautiful river in its fantastic meanderings, runs a distance of more than thirty miles, in passing from one boundary to the other. More bewitching scenery is seldom found in this land of beautiful scenes. For ages past, that town, the olden name of which was *Pequawket*, had been occupied by the Indians, and improved by their successors; the earliest inhabitants of New England. At a short distance from the village, is "Lovewell's Pond," a beautiful sheet of water, to which Mr. Webster often resorted with his fishing tackle for amusement and healthful recreation. He was then nineteen years old. On the afternoons of Wednesdays and Saturdays, he was often seen alone in his boat, floating on the surface of that water, which was so transparent, that he *appeared* to be suspended between earth and sky—angling among the smaller finny tribe, as the sage of Marshfield is now often seen in his yacht on the more turbulent waters of the ocean, angling for codfish and halibut. This amusement was then, as it now is,—his repose from study and deep thought.

"Lovewell's Pond" was made famous by "Lovewell's fight." Capt. John Lovewell, as long ago as 1725, with thirty-four men, fought a famous Indian named Paugus, at the head of eighty savages, on the shores of this beautiful pond. Both parties entered the combat determined to conquer or die. They fought till both Lovewell and Paugus were slain. Sixty of the Indians, and all but nine of the whites, "bit the dust." Finally, the remaining twenty savages fled, leaving nine of Lovewell's men victors of the field. This scene is visited with interest by all,

whether travellers or sojourners, who have ever heard the story. It is, indeed, an interesting spot. Mr. Webster occupied his place at that academy until the following September, nine months. During this period, in the faithful discharge of his duties, he passed in review his studies at College, clinched every nail, and supplied every defect. While there, he also enjoyed the pleasures of an agreeable and intelligent society. Among his associates, he included several well-bred ladies and gentlemen. There was one, Rev. Wm. Fessenden, a man of great learning and distinguished piety, for whom Mr. Webster had a particular regard. His house was open to him at all times. He had a fine library, to the use of which the youthful philosopher was invited; and that great and good man was never so happy as when he had Mr. Webster with him. He took infinite pleasure in conversing with a youthful and vigorous mind, fresh from College, and he imparted to him all that could be given from his best experience, and the fruit of his observations during scores of years. The great truths of philosophy and religion were themes on which they dwelt with mutual satisfaction. When we remember the strong adherence of Mr. Webster's father to religious principles and practices, the influence of Rev. Mr. Wood, and Rev. Dr. Smith, of Dartmouth College, his early and devoted friends, and afterwards the friendship of Mr. Fessenden, we can readily account for the confident opinions which are entertained by Mr. Webster on religious subjects, and which have always been visible in every thing he has said and done.

While Mr. Webster resided at Fryeburg he found he could do more than was set down for him to do as the Principal of the Academy. The office of Assistant Register in that place being vacant he was chosen to discharge the duties. He occupied several hours of each twenty-four in recording deeds, for which he received considerable money, and all of which he appropriated to the defraying of the expenses of his brother Ezekiel at College. At the close of the duties which devolved upon him, and which he had so well performed, the appointing power felt called on to pass resolutions and give him some testimonial as to the manner in which he had done what he had undertaken.

The time had now come when Mr. Webster was to prepare himself more thoroughly and particularly (though he little thought then of the extent) to be the teacher of nations. His plans for self-improvement would not permit him to spend any more time in teaching others the simple rudiments of learning. He therefore resigned his place at Fryeburg, grateful for the benefits it had conferred on him personally, and returned to Elms Farm. He entered the office of his friend and neighbor, Thomas W. Thompson, as a student at law, in which office he had formerly sat a little barefooted boy, to tell the clients who called, where Mr. Thompson had gone, and when he would return.

At this time, there were only eighty lawyers practising at the Superior and Inferior Courts, in the whole State. Mr. Thompson was one in good standing among them. I will here speak briefly of him.

He was born in Boston, and was the son of Deacon Thompson, an Englishman. His mother was a Scotchwoman. While he was young, his father removed (taking his son with him) to Newburyport. He was fitted for College by Samuel Moody, and graduated at Cambridge in 1786. At the time of the "Shay's Rebellion," he entered the army as an aid to General Lincoln, and served throughout the campaign during a severe winter, and until the insurrection was quelled. He first studied Theology to qualify himself for the pulpit. He was, however, appointed a Tutor in College, at Cambridge, and was a favorite among the students, owing to the suavity of his manners, and his natural, easy, and unaffected politeness. After this he studied law at Newburyport with Theophilus Parsons, named "the Giant of the Law." He was admitted to the Bar, and opened an office near the South Meeting House, in Salisbury; and in about a year afterwards, he removed to this place, and boarded with Mr. Webster's father. In due time, he bought a house for himself. He had an extensive and lucrative practice. He made himself rich by his profession. He was one of the Trustees of Dartmouth College at the time Mr. Webster graduated, and continued to be an active and efficient member of the Board till his death. From 1805 to 1807, he was a Representative in Congress. He was several times a member of the Legislature of his State, and was Speaker of the House of Representatives when the excitement of party politics was high; but his opponents and every member willingly bore testimony to his candor, his ability and impartiality in the dis-

charge of his duties. He was also a Senator in Congress from this State, and acquitted himself with honor. In 1809 he removed from this place to Concord, the seat of Government.

In August, 1819, he set out for Quebec, and was on board the steamboat *Phoenix*, from Burlington on the route to Canada, when, at midnight it took fire. The vessel was all in flames, the passengers were all escaping in small boats, and he was still asleep,—waking, he saw his situation, jumped into the last boat, already filled to sinking, and was the last person who escaped. The terrors and fatigues of that dreadful night made him sick, and, finally, put an end to his life. He was a fine scholar and accomplished gentleman, and highly respected in this State. Such is the man with whom Mr. Webster commenced the study of the law.

Yours truly.





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